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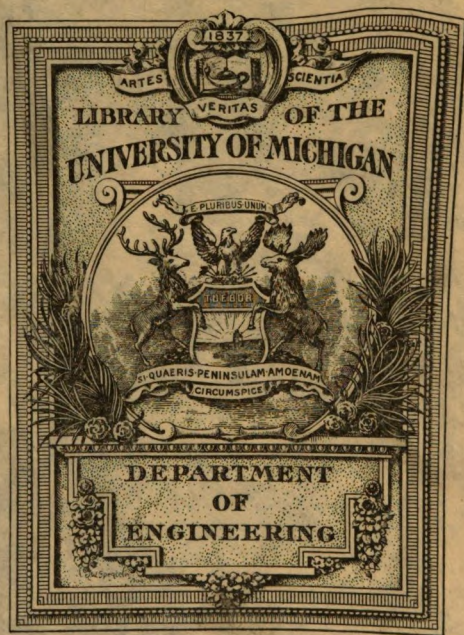
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THE
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FIRST GOLD DISCOVERIES
IN
NEW ZEALAND.

By R. A. LOUGHNAN.

REPRINTED FROM "THE NEW ZEALAND MINES RECORD"
(A MONTHLY JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE MINES DEPARTMENT).



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CONTENTS.

	PAGES
Coromandel Goldfield	1-5
Nelson Goldfield	5-13
Westland Goldfield : Buller and Grey.. ..	13-22
Otago Goldfield	22-49
Westland Goldfield : Grey, Hokitika, and South ..	49-66
Marlborough Goldfield	66-69
Auckland Goldfield : Coromandel, Thames, and Ohine- muri	69-102
Auckland Goldfield : The Discovery of the Waihi Mine..	102-110

THE FIRST GOLD DISCOVERIES

IN

NEW ZEALAND.

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[By R. A. LOUGHNAN, Journalist, Wellington.]

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IN point of sensational effect, Otago was the first of the old provinces to appeal effectively to the world. It was to Otago that the first real rush came from the other side, so famous for rushes. But few people in New Zealand are aware that the first discoveries in this country were made in Auckland, and that in the very year of the great discoveries that made a new epoch for the Australian Continent. Hargreaves was thought to have awakened by his finds at Bathurst only the sleeping spirits of the world of gold imprisoned in the rocks and gravels of Ballarat and Bendigo. Who does not remember the impressive picture of Farjeon, who imagined these spirits roused from their slumber of ages by the sound of the advancing picks? "Click, click, click," as they came nearer and nearer; and as they heard, the spirits grew wilder and wilder, welcoming the hour of their deliverance, ready to sweep into the fields of light and motion. What those fields were, what forces of energy and power were let loose, what vast changes were effected in the fate of the great continent by the side of the Tasman Sea, what fortunes were made and lost—these things and the tremendous changes they brought in their fervid train are part of another story—the story of the transmutation of Australia. It is one of the most striking stories in the history of the world.

It was, however, not only to the sleepers of Ballarat and Bendigo that the welcome sound of the miner's pick went out in 1851 as an awakener and a harbinger of good tidings. Within a few months (October, 1852) of the announcement of the discoveries of Hargreaves the sound of the pick and the shovel and the all-convincing tin dish was heard on the shores of the Hauraki Gulf, and before the end of the year Charles Ring delighted the public of Auckland City by producing some gorgeous specimens of golden quartz and sundry grains of remarkably fine gold. Enterprising men were located in the northern city in those days, and these, forming a committee, had offered a reward for discoveries in New Zealand similar to those which Hargreaves had made in the mother colony. There is more than meets the eye here; for in some other parts of the colony the gold-discoveries were viewed with suspicion and a sense of disquiet, much as the totalisator and the consultation are viewed nowadays by some people, who see in the race-track the demoralisation of man and the downfall of that steady industry which alone can assure the fortune of nations. Charles Ring proclaimed the locality of his finds—Kapanga Stream, Coromandel Peninsula—and claimed the reward of £500 offered by the enterprising committee aforesaid.

Very soon three thousand miners were on the ground, to the amazement of the Maori tribes. Some years before these had sent a war-party to overawe the pakeha, of whose rising city on the shores of the Waitemata they had conceived a jealous suspicion. The great war-canoes had swung close to the beach, and some of their men, landing, had danced a war-dance in approved fashion. Before they could do anything more practical these warriors discovered that the guns of a frigate which happened to be in the harbour were trained upon them, and saw unmistakable signs of preparation among the artillerymen on the shore above their heads. They therefore lost no time in re-embarking, and were very soon back at home safe and sound and vowing vengeance.

Imagine their feelings when the thought of the mining invasion occurred to them.

But Governor Wynyard was well advised, and things were done properly. The rights of the Maori owners were respected, and their feelings in no way surprised or outraged. These owners were the Ngatipaōa, the Ngatiwhanaunga, the Ngatimaru, and the Ngatitamatera. "The claims of these people," wrote Mr. Commissioner Mackay, who was charged with the important duty of preliminary investigation, "extend over the country on the east and west shores of the Hauraki Gulf, and as far south as Katikati on the east coast, and to Te Aroha Mountain and Waitoa in the valley of the Thames. Their lands are very much intermixed, and there is hardly a tribal boundary which has not been the subject of dispute for some generations past." In addition, he named other tribes who claimed to share with the original owners for each and all of the various reasons familiar to all who understand the mysterious subject of Native-land titles. All these tribes were glaring at the beach, expecting every moment the arrival of the gold-hunting pakeha.

The pakeha arrived in the person of the Acting-Governor, Colonel Wynyard, Bishop Selwyn, and the Chief Justice, together with the usual official train.

On the Maori side the most respected and influential of the chiefs was the venerable Te Taniwha, of the Ngatimaru. In his boyhood he had seen the arrival of Captain Cook and had been taken on board the ship of that navigator, of whom he in after-years was wont to speak with the greatest respect and appreciation. Since then he had seen the arrival of the colonising pakeha, and had joined with the more enlightened of his brethren in wishing the accomplished stranger to stay in the land of the Maori. The old chief was, of course, consistent on this occasion of the opening-up of the first goldfield. "It is well," he said to his people. "These are the tokens of peace: the presence of the Governor, the Bishop, and the Chief Justice. Ye who are here acknow-

ledge these as your parents. My children, be not sad. It is well: all is well. The messengers of God, of truth, stand there, even the bone of that which is good. The arrangements are left to you, O Governor, the Bishop, and the Chief Justice!"

This prevailed with a certain number, more particularly of the tribe of the Ngatimarū, although there were irreconcilables even in those days before the King movement and the outbreak of the great Waikato War. These stood out against any arrangement at all. But enough was agreed to for the opening of the country between Cape Colville and Kauaeranga, or the district which came to be at once known as Shortland. Within that country the pakeha was to be permitted to seek for gold on the following terms: Payment for under 500 men, £600; from 500 to 1,000 men, £900; from 1,000 to 1,500 men, £1,200; from 1,500 to 2,000 men, £1,500. In addition to the above, a sum of 2s. was to be paid for every license issued to miners. There were other details, but they are immaterial; suffice it that three thousand men began work on those terms.

Compare this moderation with the charges on the goldfields of Victoria which so excited the ire of the diggers of the early days. In October, 1853, twelve months after the above arrangement with the Maori owners of part of the Hauraki, the Victorian charge for a license was £2 per month. Here is an instance:—

GOLD LICENSE.

Colony of Victoria.

No. 38.

5th October, 1853.

THE bearer (G. Preshaw) having paid the sum of Two POUNDS on account of the General Revenue of the Colony, I hereby license him to mine or dig for Gold, or exercise and carry on any other trade or calling on such Crown Lands within the Colony of Victoria as shall be assigned to him for these purposes by any one duly authorised in that behalf.

The License to be in force until the MONTH OF NOVEMBER, and no longer.

P. C. CRESPIGNY,

Commissioner.

The new goldfield at Shortland did not, however, progress according to expectations. It was not a poor man's field at all. The spirits were only half awakened, and while the miners were toiling in discomfiture two causes supervened to take their attention away from the Hauraki as a field of fortune. Firstly, the Maori people began to get unsettled and the shadow of impending war fell over the land. Then news came that elsewhere in New Zealand, where the Maori did not think of troubling, the imprisoned spirits of the golden world had heard the advancing picks and had come out to meet the liberating miner with far more alacrity. The field of Shortland was almost abandoned for these reasons. In his report to that effect Mr. Mackay, sketching the other gold-finds of this colony, gives us the chronological order thereof: "The discovery of alluvial deposits by Mr. William Lightband at Aorere (Collingwood) in 1857; by Mr. John Rochfort, in the Buller River, in the Province of Nelson, in 1859-60; and by Mr. Gabriel Read in 1861 at Tuapeka, in the Province of Otago, in consequence of which the southern goldfields offered attractions to the mining population of Australia and this colony, and tended to prevent the further development of the auriferous wealth of the Province of Auckland."

The scene, therefore, naturally shifts to the Nelson District. Let us take a look at the imprisoned spirits listening for the sound of the liberator pick. We can do so easily, for Hochstetter lifted the veil of rock with the lever of science some years later—it was in 1859, when the Provincial Government of Nelson gave him the commission to inquire into the secret of the hidden wealth of that favoured region. We quote from his report of that year:—

The mode of occurrence of gold in the Province of Nelson is quite different from that in the Colony of Victoria. The Australian gold was originally derived from quartz reefs passing through fossiliferous strata of Silurian age, which are but very little metamorphosed, and the gold is obtained partly as alluvial gold from deposits of gold-drift ("washdirt" of the miner),

partly from the quartz veins themselves, by crushing the quartz, and subsequent washing and amalgamating processes. Upon the Nelson goldfields the gold has been originally derived from quartz veins, which occur in non-fossiliferous crystalline (or metamorphic) schists. The mica-schist and clay-slate zone, which in a breadth of fifteen to twenty miles includes principally the Anatoki and Haupiri Ranges, contains in its quartz veins and beds the matrix of the gold. The gradual denudation of the mountains, continued through countless ages, has produced masses of detritus, which were deposited on the declivities of the mountains in the shape of conglomerates, and in the river-valleys in the shape of gravel and sand. In this process of deposition, carried on under the influence of running waters, Nature herself has effected a washing operation, during which the heavier particles of gold combined in the mountain detritus collected themselves at the bottom of the deposits and close to this source, so that they can now be obtained by digging and washing. The conglomerates accumulated on the slopes of the mountains are the proper field for the "dry diggings," while from the gravel and sand of the beds of rivers and smaller streams the gold is obtained by "wet diggings."

The latter were those first worked. Writing some years later,* Dr. (now Sir James) Hector pointed out that Professor Hutton attributed the rich deposits found at Golden Gully to the denudation of the schists on which they rested, and claimed the schist as the source of the heavy deposits of quartz pebbles that formed the auriferous wash; whilst Mr. Herbert Cox, the Assistant Geologist, was equally explicit in his opinion that the drifts were not of a local character.

The progress of the "liberator pick" on this Nelson field was at first slow. Gold was found at the Moutere and along the shores of Massacre Bay soon after the discoveries at Coromandel in 1853. Two or three years afterwards the late Mr. W. T. L. Travers, F.L.S., that strenuous spirit who was ever in the van of exploration and scientific research, made a trip to the Takaka, and returned with some fine quartz specimens. But in those days what was quartz? Men had not awakened to anything more than the chances of the pick and shovel.

* "Geological Survey Reports," 1890-91.

Among the slumbering powers was that of scrip. The awakening of that power, with all his attendant forces of batteries, brokers, share speculations, and scientific equipment, was reserved for the great northern goldfield—just then neglected for the various reasons mentioned above.

In 1854-5 various small discoveries were made, without particularly impressing public opinion. A Gold Bonus Committee had appointed itself by the usual process of public meeting, by which everything was resolved in those days, and parties were out approaching the great deposits of the Aorere without much in the way of result. At length Mr. Hough, a member of the Nelson Provincial Council, found enough to induce Mr. George Lightband to accompany him to the field, and, the latter having Australian experience to guide him, they soon got something tangible. They were confronted, however, before the Bonus Committee by two other claimants—Messrs. Ellis and James—who claimed to have found gold in the Aorere in October, 1856, while the others had only started out in December. The committee decided that the merit of discovery lay with the October men, while the merit of developing belonged to Mr. Lightband. The balance was redressed by some of the citizens, who regarded Hough as the original discoverer, and presented him with a substantial testimonial. After this there was a good deal of scratching of the ground, and at last, on the 9th February, 1857, the status of the field was settled beyond doubt by the first sale of gold at auction. Messrs. Fell Bros. won the proud distinction of being the first gold auctioneers. They put up the giddy amount of 7 oz., and they got £4 per ounce for some of it.

This sale gave a great impetus to the field, though it did not tempt the world outside to leave any of its comfortable positions to run a tilt at fortune. A pessimist tried to dash all hopes to the ground by declaring that the high-water mark of the goldfield was a 10s. to 15s. wage. The digger, however, is always obstinate,

and generally an optimist of the first water. He took to the "long-tom," and soon some pretty parcels of gold began to make their appearance. The indomitable Lightband urged the diggers on, though he made but little himself—we read of his sending to Nelson the munificent yield of 5 oz. on one occasion for ever so many weeks' work—and the diggers justified his confidence in the field. Gradually the number of men rose to fifty, and then a hundred. Lightband himself was said to be getting an ounce a day, and 68 oz. was announced as the week's work of one party of fortunate miners. The yields crept up in this way until by the beginning of April there were four hundred men on the ground, and the number rose by the end of the month to a thousand. One party accumulated 100 oz. during eight weeks' work; two men got 20 oz. in five weeks; and one man obtained 8 oz. in four days.

At the same time explorers were returning from all parts of the district and reporting gold everywhere. The diggers and the gold continued to increase, until in August the gold sold in Nelson amounted to £10,000 in value. Sandwiched in with the official dry record were many sensational stories, not like those of Australia, but a fine contrast to the early discouragements of this goldfield. But the winter descended in earnest, and operations slackened considerably. The fever had, however, been kindled, and men speculated in claims and talked of the "golden shores" of rivers and the "Tom Tiddler's grounds" that were everywhere. The Maori flashed into the scene right in the foreground, picturesque and strikingly successful—so much so that several parties of dusky hue were said to be averaging easily 3 oz. a man per day. The Maori was not afraid of water even in the depth of the winter, and when the gold got beyond his reach he did not hesitate to dive, and often he came up with an ounce to reward his pluck.

In the spring gold was found in the Takaka. James Main and two mates panned off 9 oz. in three days with their tin dishes. There was a rush to the spot, and men

said the Takaka was going to beat the Aorere. After that a hundred Maoris broke ground on the Anatoki, and the year 1857 closed with magnificent prospects for the Nelson Province.

The new year opened with a rush to Golden Gully, the main incident being Chapman's scoop of 18 oz. in one day. The rushes followed to Slate River, Little Boulder, and the Quartz Ranges, and then the tide began to recede—ebb and flow, flow and ebb—and men rushed from one field to another. Though word came to Nelson and the outer world of big finds—four men here with 700 oz., one man there with nearly 200 oz. for three months' work, and others less sensational—there were also accounts of floods, and the damage they did, and the dangers they brought, and the scarcity of food they caused, and thus the numbers on the fields were not augmented from outside.

In April the discovery of gold in the Buller Valley was announced, and the presence of the precious metal all over the Nelson Province was conclusively proved. Soon after this there came some finds of the really sensational order. The miner, in the see-saw of the exciting life, began to get cunning; he diverted the streams here and there of the Parapara and the Slate Rivers. In a few days the celebrated "Island Party" took out 1,000 oz. During the winter of 1858 the cries were many, and as the men hurried hither and thither in hot pursuit they rang the changes on Slate, Anatoki, Rocky, and Parapara, and there was much talk of nuggets of rough gold of the "kidney-bean" order, and of fabulous finds with the fossicking-knife. In all this the Maori was well to the fore. In one place a party of the "*tangata*" got 6 oz. in a scoop before dinner; three of them in another got 60 oz. in three days; and two of them got 24 oz. in two days. Nor was the pakeha behind. Clerk's party got 30 oz. in a week, and Skeat and his people were on a run which gave them 1½ oz. a man for quite a time. Then the hardships of the country came into prominence—"a rugged country as

any on the face of the earth," said an old Californian; "worse than anything he had seen in the Rocky Mountains." This was emphasized by the price of provisions, with the 100 lb. bag of flour up to £4. But the long-tom and the cradle kept pegging away, and the gold-shipments from Collingwood averaged all the winter something like 1,000 oz. monthly.

This rose in September to 3,000 oz. The spring had set in well with improved finds. Stephen Kirk and party unearthed one nugget, "in shape very much like a double row of sovereigns," weighing 8 oz. 14dwt., about 10 yards from the bank of the Rocky River. Five Maoris—the *tangata* again—brought to Nelson 200 oz., the gold being of a flat, nuggety character, the pieces varying from 6 dwt. to 25 dwt. each. A party of five men with very rude appliances were said to be washing out gold at the rate of 4 oz. per hour; a party of Maoris were getting 10 gr. of gold to the pan from a heap of dirt; and the bed of the river was far richer. This continued during the summer, and the settlers of the Takaka Valley left their homes and scattered all over the field. The field grew apace at the same time; round Mount Arthur it went, running along the ridge towards West Wanganui one way, with clamour of the usual "rush" order, and south another way towards Mount Owen. Some parties penetrated into the upper Karamea country, and the big tableland of Salisbury was, of course, made familiar to many. The Moutere Hills heard the tramp and saw the men of the "rush," and the upper waters of the Motueka—its lower reaches never were remarkable as yielders of gold—gave up full many a nugget to the excited throngs. The main affluent of the river—the Wangapeka—showed best in this development, and there came a shining galaxy of names of rivers—the Baton, the Motupiko, the Motupipi, the Tadmor, the Sherry. From all these, and many more, came the same story of gold, and men standing on the divide between the watersheds of the Motueka and the Buller on Mount Owen discoursed of fortunes in the beds:

of the Hope and the Owen—the extreme sources, as it turned out in after years, of the Upper Buller Gold-field. The names, “like household words”—alas! mostly now without power to charm—crowded not far behind—Appo’s, Bedstead, Glenmutchkin, Glengyle, Rocky River, Gridiron, the Flora, the Dun Mountain, the Arthur and the Leslie Rivers, and the Merino Mountains. Diggers began to speak familiarly of the land about the Farewell Spit and the Karamea Bight, and their talk sometimes showed inclination to dwell on the mica-schists and the conglomerates and the Tertiary deposits; and it even wrestled with the Pleistocene and the Miocene.

Eastern Nelson had reached its high-water mark about this period. But the finds on the Buller began at this time to attract attention, and the winter of 1858, with its inhospitalities, sent most of the people out of the eastern fields to wait for the better season. When that arrived there came with it better tidings from the west. In consequence, the population of the diggings and the yields steadily dwindled down. Still, considering the small number of men who followed gold-mining in those early rushes, the average yields were large, and attained a value in seven years of nearly a quarter of a million sterling, as will be seen from the following table:—

Year.			Yields. Oz.	Value. £
1857	...	...	10,437	40,422
1858	...	...	13,226	51,272
1859	...	...	7,336	28,427
1860	...	...	4,538	17,585
1861	...	...	6,335	24,552
1862	...	...	10,422	40,386
1863	...	...	9,580	37,120
Totals			61,874	£239,764

In the spring of the year 1859 the report of Hochstetter was made public, in the hope of fixing the wavering opinion of the roving miner in favour of the gold-

field it described so well. It was the report of a man with an observant and trained eye—of one who, moreover, had the gift of luminous expression. The very existence of that report is one of the many proofs we have of the thorough spirit in which the leaders of colonisation went about their work in those epoch-making days. But the report fell upon deaf ears. Great as were its merits, it contained an adventurous prediction based upon certain data supplied by one of the most experienced men of the field. The diggers, however, knew their field better. They were aware that the data left much to be desired: it was their deliberate conviction, based upon experience, that the gold was not there in the quantities estimated by the man of science. The riches of the country to the westward had been revealed, it was said, in a sort of temporary flash—the sort of evidence which more than any other guides the path of the digger through the trackless wild. The practical crowd turned from the writing of man to the records of nature. Thus it came to pass that the waning field of the east was neglected for the golden prospects of the yet unknown west.

We may pause here for a moment, before passing to the stirring stories of the more exciting times of the gold-fevers, to admire the practical spirit in which the work was ordered in this old Nelson Province. Nobody knew much about the legislation needful for the preservation of order on wild goldfield country; but every one knew the mainspring to be the preservation to every man of the fruit of his enterprise, industry, and endurance—qualities in which the digger of every clime is most prodigal. Some few there were who, like Mr. Lightband, had been to Victoria and seen for themselves how the thing was done in that colony. With these men at his back, Lightband set up a few rough regulations, and when Mr. James Mackay, the first Warden of the Goldfields, came over with the necessary authority in his hands order and law reigned supreme. For the rest the population was never at any time too

large to manage, and in the winter-time the pressure, such as it was, relieved itself automatically, for large numbers returned to the haunts of civilisation to await a more favourable season. It was a population wonderfully imbued with the sense of self-government, and it grew accustomed to goldfields conditions with the utmost rapidity. Steeped it was in the practice of digging, by way of emergency, as it were; for it is on record that every settler in those districts looking over the great Nelson bays was in the habit of looking to the gold hidden about his property for the wherewithal to supplement his funds in the hour of need. When the time came for the usual trip to the capital for filling up the store and adding to the wardrobe, it was the custom to take a few days with the cradle and pick and shovel and find a few ounces to eke out the scanty means. Of all which the effect was seen later on. When the big rushes came pouring over the mountains and crowding in from the sea there was a substantial proportion of diggers who had graduated under the regulations improvised by Lightband and Mackay; and these men materially assisted the authorities of the later time in their very arduous work.

It is now time to pass on to the chronicle of the West, leaving the Nelson country to languish with fitful periods of revival, a fact which speaks well for the character of the field abandoned by the greater number for the richer country further away. The table given above furnishes the history of those fluctuations, and is an interesting and important document.

With the development of the goldfields of western Nelson and that part of Canterbury Province which is now and has been for many years known as Westland, there comes a new note into the story. Nelson, on the eastern side, offered the adventurer shelter at hand, comparatively speaking. When tired of the gold racket he had only to walk a few miles to find himself again among the comforts of civilised life. They were not great, it is true, for the colony was but young; but

such as they were they were the refinement of luxury in comparison with the makeshifts of the rough western country. There are, it may be affirmed, nowhere else such records of hardships. Not only was the country difficult to travel in, by reason of the mountainous surface and the fordless torrents, but the forests were poor in bird-life, and there were no fish in the rivers. Fern-root was about the only edible thing afforded by the vegetable world; and to complete the sum of the traveller's misery the rain was always descending in deluges. Even the Maori, accustomed to roam the wilds of his native country, found it hard and often impossible to subsist in these inhospitable regions.

On the threshold of that land the herald who met the adventurer was Death. The names of the victims are legion. Every one remembers the more conspicuous: Whitcombe, who perished in the surf of the Teremakau mouth; Townshend, Mitchelmore, and Salomon, who were lost on the Grey Bar; Howitt and his two men, who went down in the depths of Lake Brunner; and many more. But there is another and a heavier list of the nameless ones who perished unrecorded and unmissed in the rivers and the snows and the forests. These remind the world that the bodies of pioneers are the bridges that join the settled world to the wilderness—of the dauntless men who blaze the trail for civilisation.

Undeterred by the fate of these men, the diggers pressed on—behind them the mainspring of all things was the provincial system of government. That system seemed to have come into being in the very nick of time for the resolute pressing-forward of the pioneer work of the goldfield days. We have seen how successfully Nelson grappled with the difficulties of the east coast fields under circumstances calculated to strain the most experienced government. The same province, recognising its paramount duty to the country of its administration, stretched out a hand that never faltered to the western country, equipping expedition after expedition.

Canterbury did the same, and none the less well that the minds of the leading men were set against goldfields and miners and all the works thereof. Otago did the same in its turn, with much the same distaste on the part of the settled population; and perhaps nowhere in the world has the work of exploration in difficult country been more splendidly conspicuous for organizing skill and executive success.

But I am anticipating with reference to the southern parts of the Coast. Returning to the Buller, we find that the first gold found in that river was obtained by a party of miners who some time prior to the year 1860 had made their way over from Nelson to the Buller Valley. But Mr. Rochfort's survey party, composed of Maoris—once more is the *tangata* to the front—are said to have made a discovery a short time previous at a place known as the "Old Diggings,"^h on the eastern bank of the Buller River, about twenty-five miles from the sea. To the miners it mattered not who got the credit of the discovery so long as he was admitted to a share of the profit. The yields in the Aorere dipping at the time, and the fame of the Buller increasing daily for extent of gold and the easy character of the workings, men began to make for the new ground with ever-augmenting alacrity. At first the digging was confined to the beaches and banks of the Buller and its tributaries and some of the smaller rivers. It was a happy-go-lucky life: as soon as the best of the gold was won in any one place and the getting of more seemed likely to increase the labour of the process, "Shift Oh!" was the cry, and the men went off elsewhere in search of easier conditions. This practice turned out to be the very best thing possible for the rushes following in the trail of the first accounts, for the newcomers found plenty of verification left behind by the old ones.

The beaches and banks of the Buller turned out to be very rich, and a few years after the first discovery thousands of miners were attracted to the field. The method adopted for saving the gold, which was for the

most part of a flaky description, was very simple and required but little apparatus and preliminary labour. The miners pegged out their claims on the river banks or beaches where they had obtained a good prospect, and where water for a head-race was within easy distance; the race was brought on to the ground by means of trenches and wooden fluming, and with a sluice-box in position the miner was ready to begin business. Add that the gold was coarse, flaky, and abundant, and it is easy to see what a good time those early diggers had on the banks of the Buller.

This field seems to have absorbed a large proportion of the diggers on the Nelson side, but the outside world does not appear to have been attracted in any great numbers at first. The most important effect of the finds on outside people was the proclamation by the Government of Canterbury of a reward for the discovery of a payable goldfield within the boundaries of that province.

As the diggers approached, the spirits waiting for liberation heard them over a large range of country. "The Buller Valley," writes Mr. Alexander McKay, F.G.S., Government Geologist, in his valuable *brochure* on "The Gold-deposits of New Zealand," "constitutes an extensive watershed, approaching 4,500 square miles, and the valleys of several of its tributaries constitute goldfields that are independent of each other." He divides the valley into four sections—of which the first comprises the coast-line and lower gorge to the Inangahua Junction; the second, the country from the Junction to the foot of the Lyell Gorge, including the Inangahua Valley; the third, extending from the lower end of the Lyell Gorge to and including the valley of the Mangles River; and the fourth lying in the Upper Buller Valley.

At this point it is necessary to break off and follow the track of the earliest explorers of this region; otherwise it would be impossible to understand the tangled story of the gold-discoveries.

In the beginning—i.e., about the year 1836—there

were sundry men settled at the Steeples, near Cape Foulwind, on the first of the four sections of the above division of the future goldfield, under Green and Toms, patriarchs of those days. They were not diggers, of course. The form in which they sought gold was that of the whale and the seal, which they hunted with the usual adventures. Later on, in 1845, after the advent of the New Zealand Company, two of the surveyors of that institution—Major Heaphy and Mr. Thomas Brunner—travelled on foot from West Wanganui to the Grey River. A little later on Sir William Fox (then Mr. Fox, not dreaming of knighthoods or premierships, only just eager to do the work confided to him as the company's agent in Nelson) went forth into the wilderness with the same surveyors, and explored the headwaters of the Buller River and the country adjacent to Lakes Rotoiti and Roto Roa, and the Tiraumea River. This was in 1847. When they got back to what is now Foxhill, Brunner was despatched on a tour of more extended exploration with two Maoris, and, marvellous to relate, he traced the course of the Buller to the sea, walked down the coast to the Grey, and, keeping along the coast, got as far as the Waiho, which river rose up in one of the floods which the settlers of to-day call an "old-man flood," and stopped his further progress. Retracing his steps, he reached the Grey again, and there he found the coal-seam which was afterwards called after him. Then he struck inland, crossed the Little Grey (Mawhera-iti), and going over the saddle made his way down the Inangahua to the Buller. On the way he passed the Big River, Larry's Creek, and Boatman's, as he walked between the Paparoa Range, to the west of them, and the Victoria and the Brunner Mountains—all places destined to be famous in the gold era that was drawing near. But Brunner never suspected the presence of the gold in the river-bed, or in the tributary streams, or in the reefs of the region all scattered around on the south side of the river. From the mouth of the Inangahua he made his way to the

Rotoiti Plain, and so back to Nelson, with much to tell geographically, but of the precious metal he brought no hint. In the forties men did not dream of such possibilities as digging up gold from under their feet.

In 1853 came Sir George Grey, with offers of money for the lands of the Maori owners of this country. Donald (afterwards Sir Donald) McLean followed, and Brunner succeeded him, and in his turn Commissioner Mackay. By the year 1860 the right of the Maori to the west country—seven and a half million acres between Kahurangi Point and Milford Sound—had been acquired for a payment of some £7,000. It is interesting to know that the reserves made for the support of the Maori owners are bringing in several thousands a year at the present time, which for the hundred or so of Natives that are left of the ancient proprietors is a decently fair provision. And it was thus that there was no Native difficulty to hamper the development of mining in this part of the country. Mr. Mackay was Goldfields Warden of the Aorere by this time, and in the years immediately following he got through some very extensive explorations of that field, also of the neighbouring auriferous country of the Motueka and the Takaka, and extended his peregrinations to the Buller and the Grey Valleys. In the course of these he traversed the grass and open country of the Ahaura, Totara Flat, and Mawhera-iti (Little Grey), and returned to the mouth of the Grey, where he took soundings in a canoe, with the result that he found the river navigable for small craft. He afterwards returned to Massacre Bay by the coast, carrying with him the first sample of Grey coal seen at Nelson. “By the coast” seems easy as the words lie on the paper in the plain innocence of uneventful print; but if any one reads the reports of any of the early explorations of that part of the country he will realise what a formidable undertaking that really was. Again he proceeded to the coast—this time with his cousin, Mr. Alexander Mackay—and, getting as far as Lake Sumner, there found Mr. John Rochfort, who had entered into a con-

tract to survey the southern boundary of the Province of Nelson, and to traverse the Grey and Buller Rivers and a portion of the coast-line. This is the first appearance of Mr. Rochfort on the threshold of the region in which he was destined to do so much useful survey-work. The Mackays and he joined forces.

Towards the end of April, 1859, the Messrs. Mackay, who were trying to complete the purchase of seven and a half million acres of the west coast from the Natives, and Mr. Rochfort, who was beginning the survey for the Nelson Government, met at Lake Sumner and started over the Hurunui Saddle. Snow fell heavily and confined them to camp for a week. When the weather cleared Messrs. James Mackay and Rochfort pushed ahead down the Teremakau, and presently coming to a bluff they had to cross the river. Rochfort lost his footing on a slippery ledge of rock, and was rapidly carried down stream, the current tossing him about like a piece of timber. His companion, who luckily went down to a lower ford, managed to grasp him as he floated by, keeping his head above water till the rest of the party came to his assistance. All went down together to the Otira, where they separated. Rochfort went on with the survey, which he completed from Otira down the Teremakau to the Pakihi Plain, and thence by Lake Brunner and the Arnold River to the Grey. The Mackays pushed on down the Teremakau, and afterwards followed the coast to Mawhera (Greymouth). There they began negotiations for the sale of the lands by the Natives, who agreed to take £200, but declined to sell the block lying between the Grey and Hokitika Rivers. Messrs. Mackay and Rochfort had chartered the cutter "Supply" (Captain Jack Walker) to bring provisions to the Grey; but owing to bad weather the cutter could not cross the bar, and was compelled to land the supplies at the Buller. So far as can be gathered, the "Supply" was therefore the first coasting-vessel to enter the Buller River. After a fruitless attempt to reach Nelson by way of Maruia, the Mackays returned to Nelson in the "Supply." In

February, 1860, they started again (with Mr. Frank Flowers and three Maoris) for the Roto-iti Plains, intending to find a practicable road between the upper Buller and the upper Grey. Want of food wrecked the expedition. Eventually, however, Messrs. Mackay and Mackley, with some Natives, got down the coast as far as Okarito, and succeeded in getting the Maori owners to take £300 in full satisfaction of all their claims to seven and a half million acres, on condition that ample reserves were laid off. On the way back they found twenty Europeans at the Buller, who had arrived from Lyttelton by sea, attracted by the report of Rochfort's discoveries. These men were not diggers: they got tired of the prospecting very soon, and, little dreaming of the vast supplies of gold under their feet in the Buller Valley and down the coast, made for Nelson by the north country under Mr. Mackay's guidance, arriving safely. About this time the schooner "Gipsy," chartered by the Nelson Government, reached the Grey, and was the first vessel over the bar. Towards the end of 1860 Mr. Mackay and Major Lockett explored the head-waters of the Takaka, Karamea, and Wangaro Rivers, and in 1862 Mr. Mackay and the brothers Knyvelt blazed a horse-track from the upper Aorere to the mouth of the Heaphy River.

It was Rochfort's party that found the first gold in the Buller, towards the end of 1859. In the month of May of the next year (1860) some Maoris brought the next parcel. "I was," said Reuben White, "one of the first of the storekeeping fraternity of the goldfields on or about the month of May, 1860, on the Collingwood goldfields, when a party of Maoris came overland from the Buller River, by travelling up the sea-coast and thence by the Aorere to Collingwood (there being no other way for them to come in those days), bringing with them a parcel of gold, which they said they had obtained from a place some twenty miles up the Buller River." These things appear to have started the diggers off in small parties. The first diggings were known afterwards:

1860

as the "Old Buller," and from there the search for the precious metal spread to the Waimangaroa. That was the second of the western fields, and the trend was down the coast as well as up the course of the Buller. "Seven miles from the coast and nine miles by the river," writes Mr. A. McKay,* "from its mouth, the Buller leaves the granite mountains, through which it has formed the seaward end of the lower gorge, and has its course to the sea across alluvial or littoral deposits formed or modified by its own action. To the north side of the river the coastal plain is low-lying and swampy in character. Beneath the immediate surface are gravels, partly littoral and partly fluvial, which are gold-bearing; on the south side the land rises by a series of river-terraces to a height of 300 ft. to 400 ft. before reaching the fall to Addison's Flat; and these, not having corresponding terraces on the northern side, show that the river wandered widely over the plain between the Nine-mile and Waimangaroa, or that the sea ranged inwards to the foot of the granite range."

This was the scene of the first attempts to liberate the long-imprisoned gold. Whether the sea ever ranged in there or not, certain it is that the miners did, and that when they got to the granite mountains they matched their own toughness against the toughness of nature, and won every time, or nearly every time. They went down the coast, also past Addison's Flat, rounded Cape Foulwind, picking hurriedly at the deposits afterwards so famous at Charleston, and Fox's (the Brighton of the later miners), and Blackball, and many a grand field, taking no time to seek, and finding nothing. These were but few, and the only field of any note they knew of was the Greenstone—the creek that falls into the Teremakau, opposite the Kumara workings; and contains the only gold on that side of the big river in the whole of its course from the saddle to the sea.

But these names and finds were of a later date.

* The present Government Geologist and veteran explorer of the Geological Survey Department.

Had the rush been as numerous as it became two or three years further on, the riches of the west would have been given to the world so much earlier. But the imperative call reached the diggers of the day from the more impressive fields of Otago, and the spirits waiting in their western prison had to wait awhile longer for their much-desired liberation. The interest of the story of the discoveries naturally shifts to the east.

The imprisoned spirits of the south-east had not the prolonged experience of hope deferred which was the lot of their brethren elsewhere in New Zealand. They had the superior satisfaction of seeing their prison-bars burst open immediately after the pick of the liberating miner began to sound in the neighbourhood. Who was the first discoverer no one seems to have ascertained with any approach to certainty. It seems there was a good deal of knowledge of one sort or another during the earlier years of the settlement. Let us glance at Vincent Pyke's interesting narrative of the events of those days.

"It is difficult to say when or by whom gold was first discovered in Otago, but that the Maoris were aware of its existence before the arrival of the Europeans is an undoubted fact. I have been informed by Mr. Palmer, of Moeraki Bush, that many years prior to the settlement of the province he was assured by the Native chief Tuhawaiki that plenty whiro (or yellow stone), such as that of which the seals of the white men were made, could be obtained in the interior of the Island, and the country of the upper Clutha River was particularly indicated as a gold-bearing locality. At a later period other Natives confirmed these statements, and at least one party of settlers attempted to discover El Dorado. In March, 1852 (this seems to have been the very first expedition of the Otagan history), a party of five, a person who represented himself as a Californian miner being amongst the number, started up the Clutha in a whaleboat which Mr. Thomas B. Archibald had brought from Dunedin, and prospected the bars

and banks of the river as far as the creek now called the Beaumont; but, as none of the party knew anything about gold-mining, they returned after a three weeks' cruise, having got nothing more than the colour. Gold was found by the settlers in various parts of the province, but the fact was either suppressed as likely to produce mischievous results, or neglected as of trivial import. I have been shown a small quantity of fine scaly gold which was procured in 1853 in the neighbourhood of the remarkable chert rocks known as the Fortifications (West Taieri Goldfield).

"The first official intimation of the discovery of auriferous deposits in Otago appears to have emanated from Mr. C. W. Ligar, formerly Surveyor-General of New Zealand, and afterwards of Victoria. In a letter written in 1856 to Captain Cargill, Superintendent of the province, he stated, 'In my recent visit to the south part of the Province of Otago I found gold very generally distributed in the gravel and sand of the Mataura River at Tutarau; and from the geological character of the district I am of opinion that a remunerative goldfield exists in the neighbourhood.' But no effort was made to test the value of this discovery. In commenting upon it the Superintendent observed that 'in no circumstances would it be advisable to allow a searcher to go upon a run without leave of the lessee, or upon a Native reserve without the leave of the Natives.' Still, from time to time, vague rumours were circulated of gold being found in the mountain streams, and individuals occasionally brought into Dunedin small quantities of the precious metal. In a report on the reconnaissance survey of the southern districts the Chief Surveyor, Mr. Thomson, stated that the existence of gold was undoubted, but added, 'I have nowhere yet heard of individual success at the occupation of gold washing or digging as a business, nor have I seen above the small fraction of an ounce in the hands of any one.' Mr. Alexander Garvie, who executed a reconnaissance survey of the eastern goldfields in 1857-58, reported

that 'traces of gold were found in the gravels of several of the streams and rivers. It was found in the Clutha River above the junction of the Manuherikia, and in the Tuapeka Stream, in sufficient quantities to make it probable that it would pay to work if set about in the proper manner with some wholesale system of washing, such as sluicing. Specks were also found on the Manuherikia, Pomahaka, and Waitahuna Rivers.' In a footnote to Mr. Garvie's report the Chief Surveyor stated that the best sample which had been brought into town was found in the south branch of the Tokomairiro River, and indicated a workable goldfield. The locality referred to was afterwards known as the Woolshed Diggings, where a native of Bombay named Edward Peters was in the habit of obtaining small quantities of gold from sands in the river. Peters also obtained gold from a gully on Messrs. Davy and Bowler's run, near the north bank of the Tuapeka River, and consequently not far from Gabriel's Gully. In 1858 the Chief Surveyor discovered gold in the Lindis River; and traces of gold were found shortly after in the sands of a small stream which enters the sea near the Township of Hampden, on the Moeraki Beach.

"But, notwithstanding these accumulated proofs of the distribution of gold throughout the province, no systematic search was prosecuted until March, 1861, when some men who were engaged on the road which the Government was forming across the run of Mr. McLean to the pastoral districts beyond the Lindis Pass, in the Dunstan Mountains, accidentally struck upon a deposit of the precious metal. A small rush immediately set in, but, although fair prospects were obtained, the general yield was not very encouraging: the field was pronounced a failure, and the greater part of the miners returned. Scarcely had the brief excitement consequent on the Lindis discoveries subsided when it was revived by information of a more determinate character. On the 4th June, 1861, Mr. Gabriel Read

wrote to Major Richardson,* who was then Superintendent of Otago, 'I take the liberty of troubling you with a short report on the result of a gold-prospecting tour I commenced about a fortnight since, and which occupied me about ten days. During that period I travelled inland about thirty-five miles, and examined the ravines and tributaries of the Waitahuna and Tuapeka Rivers. My equipment consisted of a tent, blanket, spade, tin dish, butcher's knife, and about a week's supply of provisions. I examined a large area of country, and washed pans of earth in different localities. I found at many places prospects which would hold out a certainty that men with proper tools would be munificently remunerated; and in one place, for ten hours' work with pan and butcher's knife, I was enabled to collect about 7 oz. of gold.' A portion of Mr. Read's statement found its way into the public Press, and numbers of persons of all classes flocked to the scene of the discovery, which was afterwards called Gabriel's Gully in honour of the discoverer."†

This field caught on merrily. Many persons left their positions in the town and rushed to the field in haste to grow rich. Lawyers, doctors, clerks, politicians, even runholders who were in possession of a very much more certain and quite more lucrative goldfield—for wool was wool in those days—found themselves cheek by jowl with navvies, farm-labourers, and mechanics on the roads and pegging out claims side by side on the fields. Few of the men who afterwards became famous in the history of their adopted country but had a turn one way or another at the fortunes of the goldfield, and none of them but were the better for the same. The earth was a rough mother, but kindly, and she sent her

* The late Sir John L. C. Richardson, for many years afterwards Speaker of the Legislative Council.

† Mr. Read, who had unreservedly, and in the most generous manner, placed his discovery at the disposal of the Superintendent, and subsequently, at the request of the Provincial Government, prospected without remuneration, and settled several claims and disputes, received a bonus of only £500; but that sum was supplemented afterwards by an equal amount.

boys to a grand school of manliness, independence, enterprise, thoroughness, and the sterling worth whose main sign is a hatred of shams. To have heard some of those old pioneers talk was to have had a liberal education. The uniform which covered all the scholars alike—"cook's son and duke's son," as the poet sang in later years—was the blue shirt and the moleskin. The "Elytes," as they were then called, went to work at first gingerly, travelling in state with packhorses and much mystery, and so much circumspection that they were repeatedly taken for brigands. Many boast to the present day how they shadowed the redoubtable Gabriel Read himself, and many tell of the adventurous days when every other man you met seemed either a prospector or a bushranger. The farmer of the good old Scottish type, who disliked the miner intensely, was for ever calling to him as he tried to camp within his borders to "gang oot o' that wi' your clout hoose." The runholder was in a ferment because these men in the uniform of the blue serge and moleskin had the audacity to insist on the right of fossicking under his very homestead; but the merchant prepared to supply their wants, and the carrier got ready to make a fortune out of the business of carrying supplies at exorbitant rates. It was midwinter, and what midwinter can do in the way of inhospitable welcome in that part of the Otago interior—where the tussock predominates over hill and valley, where the hillsides shut off the sun for most of the day from the gullies, and where wood and all kinds of fuel are conspicuous by their absence—those know best who have lived in the country; and for the rest it needs no ghost to make them realise it. The rush, notwithstanding all these things, swept on resistless. To understand the *furor* we must get back to the narrative of Mr. Pyke.

"In August, 1861," he says, "the first gold escort brought to Dunedin 5,056 oz. of gold." As Read's letter to the Superintendent was only written on the 4th of

June, and could not have been widely known for two or three weeks later, these figures of the escort tell at once the tale of the rush accounting for the bustle and the fever.

"The excitement soon became intense; thousands were bitten by the gold-fever, and abandoned their ordinary pursuits to try their luck at the diggings. The contagion spread to the adjacent provinces, to the North Island, and finally to Victoria and the other Australian Colonies. The rush to Otago soon assumed enormous proportions. In 1860 only sixty-nine vessels entered inwards. In the following year 256 vessels, many of them of large tonnage, entered the port. The population, computed in December, 1860, at 12,691, had increased by December, 1861, to 30,269. Within the short period of twelve months the population had been more than doubled. The imports and Customs duties had increased threefold, the exports tenfold, and the territorial revenue by one-half.

"Wetherstone's and Munro's Gullies were shortly afterwards opened by the miners, and in July, 1861, another rich goldfield was discovered in the Waitahuna Stream by Mr. Gabriel Read and Captain Baldwin. The first dishful of earth washed by Captain Baldwin yielded $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.; the next washed by Mr. Read yielded $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. The place was rushed by about five hundred men, who speedily deserted it and declared the Waitahuna to be a 'duffer.' For some time there were only three parties at work. The number again increased. On the 1st September there were two hundred men on the field; on the 30th of the same month four thousand were reported to be doing well.

"In the month of September, 1861, occurred one of those feverish reactionary movements which would appear to be necessarily consequent on every new rush. The world-famous goldfields of Bendigo, Ballarat, and Ararat, in Victoria, were all rushed and deserted as unprofitable when first opened. The senseless panic which hurried thousands from Otago in 1861 is only

another illustration of the same general rule. Many who hastened to seek sudden fortunes at Tuapeka were utterly unprovided for the purpose, and numbers, deterred by the gloomy details of unsuccessful diggers, never even quitted the jetty at Dunedin until they re-embarked for Melbourne. At this juncture the Government issued a Proclamation (dated the 28th September), in which the peculiar features of the goldfields and the difficulties attending on mining operations in Otago were fairly and honestly pointed out, and exaggerated statements were denounced as 'likely to be productive of much suffering.' The Superintendent, Major Richardson, asserted in this document the existence of a valuable goldfield of considerable extent, capable of affording remunerative wages to a large population, and avowed the confidence of the Government in the auriferous capabilities of the province as a highly remunerative field for capital and labour; but at the same time deprecated the inconsiderate influx of persons from other colonies, and cautioned intending immigrants to act with greater prudence. The result was a temporary diminution of immigration, but there is no doubt that the goldfields progressed all the more favourably from the absence of undue excitement. A sufficient number of miners remained to test the ground, and in November, 1861, the escorts attained an aggregate of 73,904 oz. of gold, thus offering indubitable evidence of the capacity of Otago to afford remunerative employment to a large mining population.

"Early in the year 1862 further discoveries of auriferous deposits were made on the Waipori River and its tributaries, and also on the Woolshed Creek, a branch of the Tokomairiro River; but with the approach of winter came first a cessation of immigration, and then a gradual exodus from the province.

"The Victorian miners were alarmed at the prospect of a rigorous winter in a district where fuel was scarce, and the population consequently sustained considerable diminution, until in July (midwinter) the

total number of persons resident on the goldfields was estimated by the Commissioner at about seven thousand persons, of whom probably only two-thirds were actually engaged in mining. Many of those who left professed their intention to return in the spring; others, deceived by the appearance of the country—so different from what their Australian experiences taught them to consider as auriferous—entertained the fallacious idea that the mines were exhausted. Those who remained certainly had no reason to regret having done so, for the minimum yield of gold in any one month—that of July—as evidenced by the escort returns, independently of the quantities brought down by private persons, was 10,557 oz.

“Some discoveries of smaller extent, yet promising great results hereafter, were made during the winter months of the year 1862. The first of these was at Timbrell’s Gully, under Mount Highlay. Deepdell Creek, a branch of the Shag River; Fillyburn, a branch of the Taieri; and Murphy’s Gully, all in the neighbourhood of the Mount, were successfully prospected. Gold was also found at Coal Creek, on the head-waters of the Shag River. More recently a party of miners were discovered working on the Dunstan Stream, near its junction with the Manuherikia; and, in a report on the reconnaissance survey of the north-western districts, Mr. James McKerrow stated that gold had been found by a shepherd between Lake Hawea and Lake Wanaka, on Quartz Creek, a small stream which takes its rise in the watershed between the Hawea and Wanaka Lakes.

“In August, 1862, two Californian miners, named Hartley and Reilly, lodged at the office of the Chief Gold Receiver in Dunedin 1,047 oz. of gold. The locality whence this treasure had been obtained they refused to divulge until the Government had guaranteed to them a reward of £2,000, conditionally on 16,000 oz. being brought down by the escort within three months. These terms having been accepted, they stated that the field of their labours was on that portion of the Clutha

River which is situated between the junction of the Manuherikia and that of the Kawarau Rivers. No sooner was this information made public than a rush of unprecedented magnitude occurred. Without waiting for any confirmation of the prospectors' statements, thousands hastened to the new field. Clerks resigned their situations, and mechanics quitted their work. On the other goldfields miners deserted payable claims, and for a brief period Tuapeka and Waitahuna were nearly deserted. That a reaction should occur was inevitable. It was hastened in this instance by a scarcity of provisions, principally of breadstuffs, which could not be procured in a remote district in sufficiently large quantities to feed an extensive population. Half-a-crown was readily paid for a pound of flour; other stores were retailed at proportionate rates; and wood for making the miners' cradles sold at fabulous prices, as much as £3 having been paid for an old gin-case. Much disappointment was caused by the peculiar character of the workings; even the experienced miners of Australia and Tuapeka were unaccustomed to regard the bed of a rapid and turbulent river as the repository of gold. Many returned to Dunedin with even greater haste than that with which they had rashly quitted it. Those who remained, however, quickly overcame the novelty of the position, and their labours were amply rewarded. The banks of the river on either side became occupied by a numerous population, whose tents gradually extended from above the confluence of the Kawarau River to below the gorges of the Beaumont Burn, a distance of nearly seventy miles. Others tested the Manuherikia, and perhaps the most valuable and productive claims in the district were those at and near the junction of this stream with the Clutha. The auriferous country discovered by Messrs. Hartley and Reilly is at the western base of the Dunstan Mountains. It was therefore called the Dunstan Goldfield.

"In September, 1862, another discovery was com-

municated to the Provincial Government by Mr. James Lamb, one of a party of six Victorian miners, who brought to Dunedin about 28 oz. of coarse nuggety gold obtained at Moa Creek, on the Nokomai River, a branch of the Mataura. Contiguous to this creek there is a large extent of auriferous country bordering on the Nokomai, and extending over the dividing range through the Valley of the Nevis to the Kawarau River, throughout the whole of which parties of miners are working with satisfactory results. The Dunstan, Nokomai, and Wakatipu Goldfields are therefore united by a continuous series of gold-workings.

“ Before the close of the year 1862 70,000 oz. were transmitted by escort from the Dunstan Goldfield, but this was not all derived from the river-workings. Towards the end of September the Clutha, flooded by the melting of the snow in the far-distant mountains whence its sources are derived, covered the beaches and drove the miners from their claims. Then they began to explore the surrounding country, and numerous rich gullies were discovered amidst the ravines of the Obelisk Ranges. One of the first and most important of these was Conroy's Gully, so called after the name of its discoverer. The Carricks, a bold and lofty chain of mountains, separate the Dunstan Goldfield from the Valley of the Nevis, the latter being comprised within the boundaries of the Nokomai district. Three miners crossing this range discovered payable auriferous ground on the western watershed, near the short track to the scene of Lamb's discovery at Moa Creek. In one day they obtained 2 oz. of rough gold with a shovel and tin dish, and immediately reported the circumstance to the Warden at Dunstan. As usual, a rush took place, and some exceedingly rich finds were obtained. The locality received the name of Potter's Gully, in honour of one of the prospectors. About the same time several gullies were opened in the Umbrella Ranges, and on the banks of the Waikaia, a tributary of the Mataura River, a permanent goldfield of some extent was also discovered.

It is worthy of note that shortly after the discovery of Tuapeka Mr Read reported the existence of gold on the Wendon and other streams, but little note was taken of it at the time. There was, indeed, a small rush to what was termed the 'Blue Mountains' in the early part of 1862, but the prospectors failed to discover a remunerative goldfield, and the development of an extensive tract of auriferous country was thus reserved for a later period.

“Discoveries of greater importance were shortly after made. In October, 1862, it was rumoured that a miner named Fox had found a goldfield of surpassing richness in some remote and unexplored region, and this rumour was confirmed by the statements made by Fox himself during a brief visit to the Dunstan Township. Numbers went out in quest of the new field, but for a time their researches were baffled, and the disappointed miners began to regard the report as a delusion. One party, however, whilst roaming through the country on this errand, accidentally lighted upon auriferous deposits of considerable value and extent. The scene of this discovery was the Cardrona Creek, a tributary of the upper Clutha. The attendant circumstances were thus narrated in a letter addressed to the Warden of the Dunstan Goldfield by Mr. Michael Grogan, one of the prospectors: ‘On the 9th November, whilst a crowd of diggers were camped on the banks of the Cardrona, Mullins and myself took a walk to see how that part of the country looked, and in walking along the river, where what I call a slide had occurred, there had been a track formed by the cattle. I, being a little further up the creek, sat down until Mullins came up. He immediately told me that some person must have lost some gold, and produced about 4 dwt. that he had got on the cattle-track. We still continued up the creek until we thought it time to return to our camping-ground, and on our way back he showed me the place, but on searching for more we could get none, and from the appearance of the black soil we certainly thought

that it must have been lost by Fox or some other person. Two days afterwards, having received some information as to where Fox was working, myself and mates were ahead of others, and on coming again to the spot I took my swag and laid it on the bank, saying, 'There is where the gold was got.' Then I walked to the spot, and on breaking up the surface the first thing that I discovered was a bit of about 3 dwt., and that afternoon we nuggeted out 9 oz. 6 dwt. 12 gr.' A number of people hastened to the new field, but in the meantime Fox had been tracked to his haunts, and the fame of the Cardrona was quickly eclipsed by the greater attractions of what was termed 'Fox's Rush.' At the time Dr. Hector,* the Government Geologist, was on a tour through the country, and he happened to be a spectator of Grogan's discovery. Following up the Cardrona to its source, he crossed the Crown Ranges, on the western side of which he came upon Fox's party and about forty others quietly working in a secluded gorge of the Arrow River. A few days after Dr. Hector's visit a large party of miners, pursuing the same track, observed the smoke of the camp-fires, and, following the clue thus given, suddenly presented themselves on the scene of operations. Secrecy was no longer possible. The news was quickly circulated throughout the province, and an extensive migration from other fields ensued. The Arrow and its tributary gullies were thoroughly prospected, and large quantities of the precious metal rewarded the toil and industry of the miners.

"The attention of the miners was next turned to the Shotover, a considerable stream, or rather mountain-torrent, the head-waters of which take their rise in the Alpine Ranges, near Mount Tyndall. The fortunate prospector was Mr. Thomas Arthur, who with three mates obtained 200 oz. of gold in eight days by washing in the sands of the river-beach. The passage up the river

* Now Sir James Hector, K.C.M.G., late Director of the Geological Survey, N.Z.

2—Gold Dis.

was impracticable, owing to the lofty and precipitous rocks which hem in the channel on either side. But nothing daunted the hardy adventurers who had invaded the hitherto unexplored solitudes of this remote region. Armed with picks and shovels they climbed the rugged mountains—some of which attain an altitude of 7,000 ft. above the level of the sea, their gaunt sides seamed with dangerous ravines, and their summits clothed in perpetual snow—and wrested the auriferous treasures of nature from the wild glens where probably human foot had never ventured before. Thus the rich locality known as Moke Creek, and its tributary Moonlight, were attained by surmounting the very crest of Ben Lomond.

“Higher up the Shotover numerous rich gullies were discovered, principally on the western watershed. And the beaches of the river itself were successively prospected for a distance of more than thirty miles, the miners crossing the adjacent ranges and descending to the stream wherever it was found practicable to do so. One of these beaches was named Maori Point, owing to its discovery by two Natives of the North Island—Dan Ellison, a half-caste, and Zachariah Haeroa, a full Maori. As these men were travelling along the eastern bank of the river they found some Europeans working with great success in a secluded gorge. On the opposite shore was a beach of unusually promising appearance occupying a bend of the stream, over which the rocky cliffs rose perpendicularly to a height of more than 500 ft. Tempting as this spot was to the practised eyes of the miners, none of them would venture to breast the impetuous torrent. The Maoris, however, boldly plunged into the river, and succeeded in reaching the western bank; but a dog which followed them was carried away by the current and drifted down to a rocky point, where it remained. Ellison went to its assistance, and, observing some particles of gold in the crevices of the rocks, he commenced to search the sandy beach beneath, from which, with the aid of his mate, Haeroa, he gathered

300 oz. before nightfall. A systematic investigation of the locality ensued, and resulted in the discovery of valuable and extensive deposits.

“Other gullies and beaches further up the river were shortly afterwards opened up. The richest and most considerable of the former is Skipper’s Gully, which with its numerous tributaries may be said to constitute a goldfield of itself. The shores of Lake Wakatipu have also been explored. On the northern watershed of the west arm and the eastern watershed of the north arm of this, one of the greatest of our inland seas, several famous gullies have been discovered, such as Few’s Creek, Simpson’s, the Butlerburn, and others of less note. Still more recently mining adventure has progressed in the direction of Mount Macintosh (the Earnslaw of the maps), and on the Rees River and its eastern tributaries a considerable extent of payable ground has been struck. In March, 1863, and the following months several small gullies were discovered near Mr. Gardiner’s station, on the Tallaburn, at the southern extremity of the Mount Benger Goldfield, and about the same time gold was discovered at Moa Creek, a tributary of the Poolburn. In April a rush took place to the Manuherikia Valley, where a small goldfield found on the run of Mr. Black afforded remunerative employment for a time to a considerable number of miners. More important discoveries were made in May, 1863. The first of these was at Campbell’s Creek, which runs from the Obelisk into the Waikaia River on the western side of the Obelisk Ranges. The next discovery was that of the Mount Ida Goldfield. On the 20th May a miner named William Parker and his mate found payable prospects on the Hogburn, a small stream which takes its rise in Mount Ida and joins the Taieri River above the lake, and several contiguous creeks have been successfully tested. The first escort brought down 4,320 oz. of gold from this new field. In June it was reported that gold had been discovered on some of the branches of the Serpentine Creek, a western tributary

of the Taieri. On the 15th July an application was made by Mr. Simon Frazer for a prospecting claim on a creek which rises in Powder Hill, on the east bank of the Taieri, about sixteen miles from Dunedin.

" Perhaps one of the most peculiar conditions under which gold has been developed in Otago is presented by the coast workings near the Township of Hampden, on the Moeraki Beach. Very fine, but rough, gold is there found amongst the detritus of the sea-shore intermixed with iron-sand, fragments of crystals, and minute gems, chiefly garnets and zircons. Samples tested by competent metallurgists have yielded at the rate of from 50 oz. to 100 oz. to the ton. The quantities operated upon have been small, and the results are consequently indecisive; but the particles of gold are so generally diffused through the sand as to leave no doubt of its remunerative character if subjected to proper scientific treatment. These sands are found along the coast from the mouth of the Big Kuri Stream to Vulcan Point, and similar deposits have been discovered beneath the soil on the adjacent creeks and gullies. Gold has also been found under similar circumstances on the sea-coast near the mouth of the Clutha River, with this difference, that the fragmentary gems are absent, and the gold itself is flatter and more water-worn than at Moeraki.

" The quantity of gold exported to the 31st July, 1862, amounted to 458,448 oz. 18 dwt., and there remained in the hands of the Treasurer at that date 4,787 oz. 6 dwt.—in all, 463,236 oz. 4 dwt. For the twelve months ending the 31st July, 1863, 514,385 oz. 17 dwt. were exported from the Port of Dunedin, and 9,240 oz., the produce of Otago, from other ports in New Zealand. To these amounts must be added 23,657 oz. 3 dwt., which at the above date were lodged in the Dunedin Treasury in excess of the balance in hand on the 31st July, 1862. By adding these amounts to the produce of 1861-62 we arrive at a grand total for the two years of 1,010,519 oz. Calculating 24,000 oz.

as a ton of gold, this gives 42 tons and 210 lb. troy, of the estimated value of £4,042,080. Even this does not fully represent the produce of the Otago mines. On the 31st July, 1863, 10,000 oz. were held by the banks, besides a considerable quantity in the hands of country branches and gold-buyers. The miners themselves are known to retain a large amount of gold in their possession, and on the whole I feel assured that I am rather under than over the mark in assuming that 30,000 oz. have been obtained in addition to the quantity officially reported. When it is borne in mind that the whole of this treasure has been raised in the space of twenty-four months by a mining population whose average number for the entire period is computed at 12,000, it is impossible to avoid recognising the fact as one of the most splendid results ever attained in any gold-producing country of ancient or modern times."

The above is the official account of a great happening. It leaves much to the imagination, of course. For example, it does not discriminate between the old population and the new. So long as the old population made up the body of the goldfield recruiting there was not much for the older residents to note. But soon there came into the population a new element. Victoria had experience of the goldfields, and contributed a large contingent of diggers. The fame of the exceptionally good finds, as above measured statistically, having gone forth, there came an irruption of strenuous men, "bearded like the pard," "full of strange oaths," free of speech, with a fashion of invading the properties they came across, on the understanding that no place was sacred from the all-pervading digger—not even the site of a church. Provisions they were ready to pay for, but if there was no supply afforded—and in some cases the staid old folk thought it wise to refuse to afford—then the supply could not be done without. With their houses on their backs, they marched out into the wilderness, careless of roads, making light of hardship, content with little, enduring privation to the utmost verge of the possible, startling

in the boisterousness of the enjoyment they indulged in when privation was exchanged for the pleasure of riches. The good, easy folk of the newest colony soon realised in how many ways it was possible to paint the towns and the country red. Withal, the new men were order-loving, and their fanaticism was for fair play. In the prime of life, athletic, vigorous, enterprising, resistless, they poured into the fields, and the hum of their tremendous industry filled the land. Armies of camp-followers went in their wake, towns of canvas arose as by magic, the spirit of unrest penetrated to every gully, topped every mountain, and crossed every river. It was a ranting, roaring time, and with the sound of revelry always there went the note of lamentation, for success and failure ever go hand in hand on the gold-fields of the world. It is the special characteristic of the mining life—the necessary corollary to the conditions upon which the riches of the earth are seized. Moreover, the terms “success” and “failure” did not mean quite what they seemed. When the rushes were at their height the fashion of the time turned against small yields; wages were despised; men would work for nothing less than fortune; and the fortune must be in evidence before they would touch its surface with pick and shovel. With yields such as are described in the report of Vincent Pyke in the preceding pages it is small wonder that this enterprising, courageous, strenuous people would be content with nothing short of the best. Thus it came to pass that men often ran away from rich ground, seeking something better, of which the daily reports brought word to their sharpened senses. Often it happened that while men were marching away lamenting the littleness of what they had struck, keeping their eyes open for more, others coming up in the rear divisions of the army of the “rush” would happen on the abandoned claims, and, setting in, would unearth the fortunes left by the hasty first owners of the ground.

Gabriel's was the first great camp, the focus of

ardour, the centre of effort, success, and even of disappointment. The winter, hard and bitter, foodless and fuelless, passed into spring; the earth smiled on all with her riches; the imprisoned spirits, liberated daily in great numbers, made the welkin ring with their jubilations. Presently came the news of the great find of Hartley and Reilly. They were known to many as spending their days in experienced search, and when the news of their find—the greatest yet heard of by many degrees in the new digging world—arrived, there was a general rush in the direction of the Clutha—or the Molyneux, as the diggers called it in deference to the memory of the great navigator who named the river. The men went in their thousands. There was no preparation whatever for so great a force; no housing, no food, no timber for cradles, long-toms, supports, fuel. No matter! The rush just went straight ahead. Up to that time the way into the interior had been by the Shag River, and the Maniototo Plain, and the Manuherikia Valley. But this was not direct enough for the march of enterprise bent on fortune. The army of the pick and shovel, in the uniform of blue, with the soft hat and hard words, marched up the banks of the big river past the Beaumont. Up they went over Moa Flat, and past the Teviot under Mount Benger, through the fine sheep country then just taken up, and holding on soon found themselves looking down on the Dunstan Plain from the tops of the Knobby Ranges.

“Far away in the interior of Otago,” wrote Vincent Pyke picturesquely, as was his wont when unfettered by the exigencies of official routine, “there are three great mountain-ranges radiating northerly from the Lammerlaw, mother of mountains. To these ranges early explorers, more practical than poetic, have affixed the characteristic names of ‘Rough Ridge,’ ‘Raggedy,’ and ‘Knobby.’” The top of the last-named, over which lay the way of the adventurous diggers of that time, is thus described by the same writer in the same fine book:*

* “Wild Will Enderby.”

"Huge, unshapely masses of rock—weather-beaten, geological veterans—blackened and seamed and scarred by I know not how many centuries of conflict with the elements; some prostrate, some erect, others inclining earthwards; some fantastically grouped, others isolated and solitary—all scattered at irregular intervals amidst immense tussocks of snow-grass, like relics of a vast Druidical temple. Such is the scene to which I have the temerity to introduce the reader." Travelling along this highland, the rush found itself overlooking the junction of the Clutha and Manuherikia Rivers. What the scene was like after they got down into that promised land, let the same writer tell: "Nearly 4,000 ft. below lay the level expanse of the Dunstan Plain, with the great river Molyneux (the Clutha of the maps) winding through the centre, flashing back the dazzling sunlight from its surface. Clusters of snowy tents dotted the river-bank, and larger patches of white, where gaily coloured flags fluttered like gaudy flowers, denoted the sites of the rival townships. In the distance they looked like mere toys of puny dimensions, and the bravest banner in that tented field showed immeasurably smaller than a child's handkerchief. Dark specks were crawling to and fro like insects on the plain, but these were men standing some feet and inches high. Horsemen, galloping ever so swiftly, seemed but to move with the rapidity of snails. The clouds of dust that shrouded lumbering wagons, laden with all that commerce could offer in exchange for gold, appeared no greater than the wreaths of smoke that escaped from the observer's pipe. Around the margins of the plain—once a lake, where, untold ages since, gigantic moas quenched their thirst—arose terraces so wondrously resembling military earthworks that had an armed host suddenly appeared thereon it would scarcely have excited surprise. Over and beyond these towered massive mountain-ranges, 4,000 ft., 5,000 ft., 6,000 ft., and more over the plain, all girdled and flecked with snow on their southern peaks and in the sheltered ravines. Northwards St.

Bathan's reared his hoary head high above his fellows. In the immediate foreground frowned the heavy Dunstan Ranges, capped by the 'Leaning Rock,' showing in sharp outline against the clear blue sky; and the broad bosom of Mount Pisa looming over the shoulder of Cairnmuir bounded the far horizon. Westwards the purple hills culminated in the Obelisk (the 'Old Man' of the miners' parlance); beyond arose the twin peaks of Ben Nevis, and, far exceeding and surpassing all, the double cone of the Remarkables, on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. These last, as seen from afar, shimmering in the crystal robes of winter, appeared almost as a silver cloud. But clouds, like human passions, pass by and are not; the mountains stand like the decrees of the Creator—solid, immovable, majestic—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

It was not long before the river-bed was all taken up by the rushing, swarming diggers, to the accompaniment of all the concomitants. There was work by day—such work as is inconceivable by the staid dwellers in quiet cities—and the nights were given up to ranting and roaring. The weather was "wondrous cold"; fuel was scarce; food the reverse of abundant, and dear beyond the dreams of the avaricious storekeeper; and timber for mining purposes was worth almost its weight in gold. But the strenuous people pressed on to fortune regardless of hardship. Bad characters flocked to the scene, and there were strange disappearances, causing no more attention than the shifting circles on the broad bosom of the turbulent stream that gave of its gold to all impartially. The gold-buyers were early in the field; banks were improvised in the precarious shelter of tents, and the wealth of the field was stored in saddle-bags doing duty as pillows by night.

One thing strikes the reader of the accounts of that stirring time—it is that from the first the Government of the Province had the rushes well in hand. There was the experience of Australia and California, it is true, fresh at first hand, in the possession of large

numbers of roving men who had learned to value law and order. But when every allowance is made for that circumstance, it remains plain that the Provincial Government rose to the occasion most adequately. The men who had been set to rule a quiet population of farmers, peacefully wrestling with the ordinary problems of the wilderness, proved themselves capable of coping with the difficulties of a tremendous inrush of eager, excited, fiercely energetic people with the strangest views of independence, often under stress of terrible privation. A magnificent Police Force was organized, chiefly from Victoria, and did splendid work under its noted chief, St. John Branigan. Each goldfield was placed under a Warden, and a body of needful legislation was devised at short notice, equal to every emergency, with the full confidence of a contented body of miners. Justice was done promptly and well; security and peace reigned throughout the whole seething region. More than that, the Government began early to cope with the roading problem, and roads soon spread over the land worthy of any country under the sun. These roads, grandly graded, well metalled, carried over hill and dale, are magnificent monuments of the practical ability of the men who managed the affairs of the Otago Province in those troublous days. A regular escort service for the gold was established, postal matters received adequate attention, every department of civic and commercial life was properly cared for, and each new rush found the authorities keeping masterful step at the earliest possible moment. A grander proof of the capacity of the British race for self-government never was given in any part of the world.

On swept the torrent of gold-seekers to the regions of the Upper Clutha, and presently it was at the picturesque bay of Wakatipu, where the Town of Queenstown now stands. Ten thousand men astonished the station-holder (Mr. Rees) with the smoke of their fires and the sheen of their tents one fine morning. The noise of the advancing swarms had preceded them, but

it was hoped that the worst might be averted. When Mr. McKerrow's survey party arrived, shortly before, they had been received with a certain amount of hesitation, which, on their real character appearing, had turned into the most genial of hospitality. The rush came at last, however, and Mr. Rees, bowing to the inevitable, moved his station homestead away over the water to a flat under the shadow of the Remarkables, and his relations with the diggers never were anything but the very best. Indeed, he soon found profit as well as popularity—the popularity which manliness and good sense always command in a manly community—in his share of the connection.

From the new headquarters the rush spread over the adjacent country. The Clutha rising, as narrated in the official communication of Vincent Pyke, helped the onward movement by sending the claim-holders off right and left to prospect the big ranges and the rich gullies on either side. "Conroy's," the "Bannockburn," and a hundred other places of note were opened up. The Carrick Ranges were scaled, and "the Nevis" and "the Nokomai"—names to conjure with in those days—added themselves to the list of exceptional wealth. Switzers flashed like magic into the history of gold-getting; the township of the calico store and the druggist publichouse, and the street of half timber, half tent, sprouted from many a hillside like the proverbial mushroom.

On the other side of the Kawarau there was the great find of Fox at the Arrow, one of the most wonderful of the El Dorados of that time, long spoken of afterwards with 'bated breath as the greatest mystery of the field, the mother of a thousand strange stories—all about the clever prospector who for months foiled a thousand of the tribe of Sherlock Holmes, which, to be sure, was not known by that name in those days. After the Arrow came the Shotover, with its stirring tales of adventure, none of them more moving than the story

of the Maoris who, in rescuing their dog from the torrent, happened upon twelve hundred pounds' worth of the precious metal in a few hours of a winter's afternoon; and none more pathetic than the tale of the big flood that came down one fatal night like a wall, drowning the rush camped low along the banks of the treacherous stream. On the other side, the Cardrona came into vogue, when its merits found time to be considered after the excitement of the chase of the Fox party had subsided with the Arrow discovery, the day after the arrival on the scene of Dr. Hector. Further in towards the "Big Divide" the rush swarmed among the inhospitable rocks of the towering ranges, and quartz came for the first time into the thoughts of the miner. By this time—these were the years '63 and '64—the industry of mining had begun to wear a settled aspect. Cattle, the property of diggers, began to browse in the neighbourhood of the mining tents; great water-races were seen winding round the sides of the broad hills, leaping quietly over deep ravines by means of the timber "fluming" of the miners, suspended from the sides of precipitous cliffs, defying the ordinary observer to guess how they came there. Up the valley of the Manuherikia the gold-fever had spread, and its strongholds were Black's, Tinker's, a legion of likely places more, and at the head of valley rose the Township of St. Bathans, rich and prosperous by reason of the big finds in its neighbourhood. A high, cold country, but golden, and therefore populated by the all-conquering miner. The fringes of the Maniototo were alive with the swarm of seekers, greatest and most of the strongholds of that ilk being the large area of the Naseby Goldfield. Over the ranges down to the Kakanui Mouth the digger plied his calling and nourished his hopes. He roamed through the reaches of the Shag River; he fretted the Moeraki beaches (he recked not of the mystery of the famous boulders); he sped him to the rushing Waitaki, and established himself on the fine field of the Maerewhenua.

Cobb's coaches were a power in the land by this time, thanks to the grand roads of the Provincial Government. The telegraph was seen crossing the country with its most convenient wires, the great horse-wagon was everywhere, and a host of providers of all kinds had sprung up ministering to the many wants of the miner at all points. Company-promoting had become a science to some extent, though not to the extent which its development attained in the golden North in later days. And during these days there came news from the West of big finds, ever growing, ever multiplying. The Government rose again to the occasion, and expeditions were sent over to the country of much description. Vincent Pyke, the veteran explorer, McKerrow, and many others were despatched with official sanction on to the country of the West. As for the unofficial prospectors, their name was legion and their goal was fortune—a goal for which the adventurous miner always starts without beat of drum before he leaves or track of foot after he gets under way. How many of these perished it is impossible to say: no one has ever attempted the task of ascertaining. From the actual mortality of those who were known to have started on the work of exploration, it is evident that the losses of the others must have been considerable.

During these later years the air was filled with rumours from the West and from the North, where the Marlborough fields for a while attracted population. It came to be hoped that there might be a golden link between the coasts, and it was becoming manifest that the richest of the gold near the surface was getting worked out, the day being at hand when the poor man would have to rely more on the assistance of capital for the success of his enterprise. These causes combined to direct attention westwards.

The first of the expeditions west had taken place so far back as the year 1863. It recalls the name of

Caples,* one of the most energetic and successful gold-seekers in the whole history of gold-seeking. Caples had been borne along the surface of the rush as it surged round the shores of Wakatipu, and swept up the defiles of the Shotover and the Arrow, and was among the *débris* which was left stranded at Skipper's, at Mace-town, and the head of the Lake. Caples started out alone, cutting steps in the ice with a shovel—typical but almost unserviceable weapon for work in the ice—and got over into the western watershed. He found the Hollyford River, named the same, exhausted his provisions, retraced his steps, made a fresh start further to the west, and, getting once more into the Hollyford watershed, made his way to Martin's Bay. Before reaching there he crossed the Pyke River, to which he gave the name. Great were the hopes which burst forth upon the announcement of this successful exploration. But these had to be deferred. They have not yet been realised, though it is quite understood that the country has many resources which will one day count for something in the greatness of the Britain of the South. Caples came back with nothing warmer in his tale than "occasional colour."

Vincent Pyke, two years later—early in '65—attacked the "Big Divide" further to the north. Von Haast† had some two or three years before discovered the low pass known by his name ever since. A convenient depression of some 1,800 ft., lying at the head of the valley of the Makarora, chief of the tributary streams of Lake Wanaka, it invited a prospect to the west. The expedition went up the river and got over to the coast duly, but the hardships were great and the yields were small—almost nothing, in fact, from the gold-seeker's point of view. At that time the exceedingly

* Patrick Quirk Caples, who died a few years ago at Reefton. Capleston, near Reefton, was called after him.

† Geologist to the Canterbury Provincial Government. Afterwards Sir Julius Von Haast, K.C.M.G., Curator of the Canterbury Museum. Died some years ago.

rich deposits on the Okarito and the golden country about the flats of Karangarua had not been seen by the men of the west. Therefore the distant, unknown country lying to the north of the pass was regarded as unprofitable. Had the said finds been made before, instead of after, the second crossing (Pyke's) of the Alps, that expedition might have been followed up with good results. As it was, though the plucky explorer and his companions in hardship (Coates, of the Survey Office, was second in command) were feasted and toasted in Dunedin, nothing resulted from their efforts. It came to be definitely understood that other methods of reaching "the Coast" must be found than over the southern passes of the great dividing-range. The inevitable conclusion was strongly supported by the recollection of the fate of a party of private explorers who in the preceding year had returned from a trip towards Jackson's Bay, and reported at the head of Lake Wakatipu that they had found no gold and a world of hardships. "They were like living skeletons," the constable said who forwarded their report, and that gave the stamp to the general belief about the exploration of the west from Otago.

To realise the feverish time into which the peaceful Province of Otago had been plunged by the finds of gold, one must study the returns.

The escort brought down to Dunedin for the first five month after Gabriel Read's discovery 203,483 oz., the returns for each month being as follows:—

Year 1861.			Oz.	dwt.	gr.
August...	...	...	5,056	0	0
September	...	...	19,039	15	0
October	...	...	46,613	5	0
November	...	...	73,904	0	0
December	...	...	58,870	0	0
			<hr/>		
			203,483	0	0

For the three following years the escort returns for each month were :—

Month.	1862.	1863.	1864.
	Oz. dwt. gr.	Oz. dwt. gr.	Oz. dwt. gr.
January	47,391 0 0	48,567 5 0	32,335 14 0
February	42,473 0 0	72,311 14 0	38,042 7 0
March ...	32,202 5 0	46,691 12 0	37,614 18 0
April ...	22,862 10 0	70,010 12 0	43,649 11 0
May ...	22,945 10 0	47,631 5 0	52,845 6 0
June ...	12,876 10 0	43,613 8 0	22,141 15 0
July ...	10,375 18 0	30,398 9 0	24,323 7 0
August ...	14,186 0 0	22,904 2 0	28,906 5 0
September	12,618 6 0	41,161 6 0	26,353 16 0
October...	38,777 14 0	40,612 14 0	29,939 8 0
November	37,664 18 0	43,803 8 0	33,283 18 0
December	37,260 1 0	57,955 6 0	24,527 17 0
	331,633 12 0	565,661 1 0	393,964 2 0

For the first three years and nine months after Mr. Read's discoveries 1,699,667 oz. (from the official record) had passed through the Dunedin Customhouse, and 63,970 oz. had been exported from other ports. This gave a gross total of 1,763,637 oz., of the estimated value of over £7,000,000, or an average of nearly £2,000,000 per annum. In the Census taken in December, 1864, the population of the goldfields was set down at 15,700 persons, of whom only about 10,000 were actually engaged in gold-mining; so that the returns were very large as compared with the number engaged in mining operations. The total quantity of gold exported from Otago and Southland up to the 31st December, 1872—the palmiest years, that is to say, of the gold era—was 3,026,755 oz., of the estimated value of £11,838,456.

There we have the mainspring of this great episode in colonial history. In three years and a half that comparatively small population of miners had wrested from the earth and divided among themselves an aggregate

of nearly twelve millions sterling. It was under the pressure of that spring that the miner explored every gully, climbed every mountain, and endured every hardship. Under the same stimulus the Government made the roads, organized the administration, established all the services of civilised life at a moment's notice—performed, in fact, just as great a feat as the main body of the mining community had performed, though less has been said about it by the panegyrist of the men who, but for the organization and ability of the Government, would not have succeeded anything like so well as they did. In the same manner the merchants and the bankers of that period felt the stimulus of the time, and by their enterprise, well regulated, timely, proportionate, and up to date in all things, proved themselves equal to the occasion. Take it what way you will, this great mining episode was very creditable to the colony and its population.

Before turning to the southern developments, which were the first really great goldfields of New Zealand, we left the diggers making their way down the coast from the Buller, the valley of which river was being industriously worked by a few devoted parties. The Canterbury Government of that day—Canterbury in those days included the country now comprised by the Grey and Westland Counties—was as alive to its duties as the other Governments of the early colonisation. There were survey parties out over the divide under Howitt, Drake, George Dobson, and Rochfort, delimiting boundaries, cutting tracks along the Teremakau banks and the shores of Lake Brunner, and exploring the coastline. These parties were busy in the year '63 and the year '64, about the time that Caples had reached Martin's Bay, a little before the adventures of Vincent Pyke and Mr. Coates, the well-known Otago surveyor, on and about the Haast Saddle, and contemporaneously with the geological surveys of Sir James (then Doctor) Hector and the reconnaissance surveys of Mr. McKerrow in Western Otago.

In 1863 Mr. Whitcombe, who was associated with the survey parties from Canterbury, made his fatal expedition down the Teremakau, from which he never returned. As the difficulties he had to face were typical eminently of the position of the West Coast, attacked subsequently by the diggers of the rush, a few words of description will not be out of place. On the 13th April, 1863, Mr. George Whitcombe, accompanied by Jacob Louper, a Swiss, and a party of two men, started from Christchurch to find a pass over the Alps at the head of the Rakaia, and explore the coast country on the other side, not without the hope of earning the reward offered by the Canterbury Government for the discovery of a payable goldfield. The finds in the Buller Valley, to which allusion has been made on a former page, had, it is clear, awakened the Government to a sense of its duty in the matter of developing the resources of the country. At the junction of the Wilberforce, Whitcombe, finding wheels impossible, sent two men back to Christchurch to bring provisions and horses to the Teremakau Saddle—between the river of that name and the head-waters of the Hurunui flowing into Lake Sumner. His intention was to go down the west side of the ranges to the sea-coast, and return by the Teremakau to its source. Whitcombe started with Louper, expecting to reach the coast in fourteen days, having a reasonable expectation of falling in with Maoris or some of the other exploring parties in the west country. They faced the work, therefore, with a biscuit-supply enough to give them a daily ration of two biscuits apiece for those fourteen days. It was a calculation altogether too fine for the country and the weather they were to wrestle with.

They climbed to the top of the Alpine range easily enough, and found the pass they wanted without much difficulty. But when they came to the descent to the westward the weather turned against them. With snow, and ice, and forest wet to the cores of the trees, they found camping painfully difficult. Their pass was not more than 4,000 ft. above the sea; nevertheless, the-

troubles of their travel were great. They left their tent behind to travel lighter. Stumbling into the mountain-torrents, they lost half their scanty supply of biscuit, and what was left was speedily a mass of soaked dough, unwholesome, unappetising, indigestible.

On the 23rd April, about midday, they reached some rocks in the river-bed of the Teremakau. These boulders were enormous, and a deep whirlpool barred the way. The river hissed and foamed and spun round and round in a setting of perpendicular walls, roaring like the fabled caldron of the witches. Behind them the pass rose forbidding, with the certainty that many feet of snow had fallen since they crossed it. April is a bad month for dependence on the mercy of mountain passes in the higher Alps of New Zealand.

But Louper, the Swiss, fortunately, was experienced in the ways of the mountaineer, coming from the country, *par excellence*, of the mountaineer. A point of rock projecting over the water caught his eye. He threw a rope over so as to give him a grip. He descended, trying to find footing in the whirlpool, but footing there was none. He saw a notch of a half-hand breadth in the wall confining the furious water. With Whitcombe at the rope to help at the right moment, he descended once more, got a precarious grip of the notch; held to it hard until he felt sure of himself; let go the rope; found the water floating him over, thanks to his taking his weight out of it by his hold on the rock; got over, and was soon on the other side, safe but exhausted. Cutting some sticks, he gave his friend a lift, and after some exceedingly fearsome passages the obstacle was behind them.

A dreadful night, nothing but sodden dough to eat, a little tea and sugar, and the poorest fire; to balance which advantages the night was cold and the forest round about them damp to a degree unrealisable by the man who has never been "out in the open."

The next day, weary and hungry and weak, they were confronted by a weird spectacle. The river de-

scended sheer down a precipice, and at the bottom spread out deep and wide—a reach of foaming water deep and turbulent. Up the mountain ever so high—so high as to make the explorer in search of the sign of safety giddy and hopeless—there lay a way that seemed to promise a pass round the dreadful obstacle in front barring the road to food and safety. They climbed; weary and hungry they climbed for twelve hours. At the end of that time, once more the river-bed; and the result was an advance for the day's awful toil of 200 yards. Rain, and wind, and snow, with never a chance of making a fire. The dough repelled them with its sour unwholesomeness. They huddled close together for warmth and sleep: Louper noted that poor Whitcombe shivered dreadfully.

Next day the valley of the river was full of morainic rocks, vast, rough, impassable. Thankful were they for cavities through which they could creep, avoiding the terrible clambering. The next reach was a length of three miles of water, with dense bush on either side right to the edge of the stream. It was a change from the clambering, for the going was level. But the water flowed among the trees. They marched as if in a lagoon, above the knees in the water. Night found them weaker than ever under a big rock, protecting them from wind and rain, but without the possibility of a fire of any sort. Wet, sour dough—a mere handful of the same, hardly enough to look at; no tea. They passed a weary night.

In their misery they found a day off, as it were. While Whitcombe was reconnoitring for a better way out of the dreadful morass Louper spied “the colour,” and washed a dish or two from some “splendid-looking washdirt,” as he phrased it in telling the story later on. He showed the gold (fine) to Whitcombe on his return from his cheerless reconnaissance, and the pair did a little digging together; the one bringing the stuff down from the rock-sides with his compass-stick, the iron end doing duty for pick and shovel, the other washing up-

whenever he had enough to make a start at it. After they had got about a couple of grains of fine gold the master thought there was no more time to waste. "Enough, Jacob," says he, adding sharply, "we can't spend any more time here." Jacob, nodding, added that the stuff would pay, he thought, right enough, if some kind of sluicing-power were employed. Jacob had had experience in Victoria. He used it to enlighten his comrade that they had not found the bottom, which would, as usual, give far better returns. Whitcombe said they would claim the standing reward for the discovery of a goldfield payable in reason. Thus early had the Government of the country discovered that it is not the colour only which pays, but that there must be a certain output in some regular way before any reward can be paid for discoveries.

After this gleam of El Dorado they had a bad night. The wretched dough, wet and sour, and a poor fire warming nothing! In the morning they heard the sea: they felt like the famous "ten thousand" who cried out with Xenophon, "Thalatta! Thalatta!" But the sea came no nearer apparently, and they spent another dreadful night—foodless, footsore, miserable. Next day they toiled ever onwards without seeming to get nearer the shore, of which, however, they got a glimpse through mist and rain. Six miles they thought it might be off—not more; but such miles! In the hope of finding a friendly Maori on the beach who somewhere about the point they were making for had helped a survey party with which Louper had been travelling, and had given them abundance of eels and potatoes, they made up their ravenous minds to eat the last handful of the dough—a quantity not half enough to satisfy half the appetite of half a man in the ordinary way understood by the people who live in the luxury of three meals a day, and cultivate the additional comfort of grumbling. Sleep was out of the question. After a shivering night they tackled the wet impenetrable scrub in the morning with scarce enough strength to put one

foot before the other. At 4 o'clock in the evening of a foodless day they reached the beach. Louper recognised the place. It was what afterwards came to be known to fame as the Hokitika River mouth. They made a big fire, they dried their blankets, they reflected they had been only three days longer than they had calculated on their journey to the coast—seventeen instead of fourteen. They took a little comfort from the situation. But things had grown serious: food there was none. All the way over from the pass they had killed neither rat nor bird, and there on the coast were the tracks of wild dogs mocking them with the assurance that they had destroyed the wood-hens, which in those days used to be so abundant in all the out-of-the-way places on the coast.

A calm day—foodless, but not hopeless. There would be Maoris next day, at the Arahura. They slept for the first time since they left the pass dry and comfortable; and it is good to be dry in those awful wet places sometimes. In the morning they took the beach—the only road in those parts for the traveller. “How different on the beach walking in the sun!” said Louper, and, if his comrade did not reply with heartiness, it was because of his extreme weariness.

At the Arahura their staggering walk was ended by the sight of the water in flood, and the certainty that the friendly Maori of other days had been burnt out and driven to fresh woods and pastures new. A hungry search through the remains of the burnt-out whare revealed a few potatoes and some Maori cabbage. They were set to cook, and Whitcombe dropped into the sleep of utter weariness, mental and bodily.

“Hallo, Louper!” says he, waking with a start. “You have lost a power of flesh. Jacob, how do I look? I feel very weak and hungry.”

Says poor Jacob, “Cheer up, sir!” and sought to comfort him by saying many things agreeable and pleasant such as one says to a child who is weak and hopeless. At the same time he noted that Whitcombe’s

eyes were sunken deep in his head, his lips white, his face like wax, yellow and dull; he fancied that he could see the teeth through the emaciated cheeks.

The dinner of potato and wild cabbage set them up ever so little. Louper wished to remain there all night and gather shellfish, so as to have a good meal of some kind before tackling the rivers. It was wise advice. Whitcombe took it well enough, and they sat down. An hour of the pelting rain proved the last straw. Louper tried thereupon to cross the Arahura, but the water drove him back, and they sat down again.

The waiting was too much for the weary man. "Jacob, we must do our best to get over. I am harassed through hunger, cold, wet, sandflies and fleas. We must get out of this misery as soon as possible."

Thereupon the weary men made another attempt to get over the rushing river, and this time they succeeded. At midnight they reached the terrible Teremakau. There was again a disappointment—the expected Maori was gone. In the morning they saw numbers of pigeons. Vain regrets passed through their minds; they had no gun—therefore no food. Louper pointed out that the river was not fordable. Whitcombe said they must get over to save their lives. Louper suggested following up the river in hope of catching a wood-hen or two to give them heart. Whitcombe was unable to face the bush again. Over the Teremakau they must go, and at once, so as to get to the Grey, where there would be help. They would cross somehow, and Whitcombe would go on to the Buller, if necessary, to send help to Louper to enable him to carry out the programme of meeting the men at the Teremakau Saddle, away up in the mountains yonder.

Whitcombe proposed the construction of a raft. Louper objected that in their present state a raft would be fatal. A couple of canoes were found. The very thing. They lashed them together, and against the remonstrances of Louper they embarked in their frail craft, and pushed out into the stream rushing down to

the sea. The canoes felt the swirl at once; they sank lower in the water; helpless, they began to sweep towards the bar, getting lower in the water every moment.

"Leave the canoe, Jacob. Swim to this side; quick, or you will be drowned."

Whitcombe had his coat off by this time, and presently he took a great plunge into the river. The canoes turned sideways to the current, Louper holding on like grim death, while Whitcombe struck out for the shore with the mighty strokes of a strong swimmer. The canoes, sinking deeper, were turned over in the current, and Louper, being thus drawn under water, lost sight of his comrade. The canoes coming up a little in the water, he realised that he was near the bar, at the foot of the first great breaker. Having realised, he was overwhelmed by the breaker, which buried him with a roar. He stuck to the canoes, and there ensued a see-saw, the canoes going out to sea one moment and coming back the next, the shuttlecock of the great seas. They edged by degrees towards the end of the bar—the south end. Watching his chance, Louper let go his hold, and a big wave dashed him on to a pile of driftwood. He grasped the pile, and managed to hold on till the sea receded; then crawled up quickly into safety, and lay on the beach all through a terrible night. In the morning he saw that he was a mile south of the river they had tried to cross.

Reviving a little with the sun shining down upon him, he started to walk along the beach, looking for sign of his comrade. Soon he came across his coat, then some tobacco, then a few things of his personal "kit," and then the canoes; lastly, a pair of boots sticking up out of the sand. What might they mean? Louper hurried to them, aghast; there could be but one explanation, he thought. He was right: he touched the body of poor Whitcombe, the head buried deep in the sand. To take the corpse up above high-water mark was the work of a moment of great effort. Louper wrapped the coat round the body, added the blankets

he found in the canoes, and buried his comrade with reverence. He placed some logs over the grave he had dug in the sand with his hands, and went his way with what strength was left him.

By the next day, about midday, he had made some three miles up the river through the dense skirting bush, and he could go no further. It was a practical proof of the correctness of poor Whitcombe's refusal to take to the bush. But help was at hand. When night fell there was the bark of a dog, and the light of a fire not far off on the same side of the stream. It was a Maori's fire, and the Maori shared with Louper his scanty fare and his whare. This enabled him to go up the river the next morning a few miles. As he lurched along—voices of men speaking! A canoe with five Maoris was going down the stream. The Maoris put him over the river, and directed him to the diggings on the Hohonu Creek, and there he was welcomed by some Maori women, who fed him with wood-hens and eels. He slept the sleep of the weary, and was able in the morning to follow the creek up until he heard the axes of Howitt's survey party, and his troubles were over. Clothed, fed, and provided with a horse, he went on his journey to the Teremakau Saddle, after Howitt had put him over Lake Brunner—the lake in which that intrepid explorer was to lose his life in a few months with two of his men. When Louper reached the Saddle the men failed to recognise him, received his news with sorrow, and went with him gently on the journey towards Christchurch. In two days of easy travel they were at the station of Mr. Taylor, who, seeing how matters stood, very considerably sent a special messenger to Christchurch to break the sad news to the family of poor Whitcombe. The tidings were received by the whole settlement with deep sorrow. "The Provincial Council," says the official chronicle of the time, "voted £1,000 to the family of Mr. Whitcombe, and £100 to his plucky and faithful attendant. Mr. Whitcombe was the first officer employed by the Canterbury Provincial Government who

had met his death in the discharge of his public duty. In April, 1864, the body was removed from the place where Louper buried it and conveyed to the Grey, where it was interred in the cemetery."

The exploring went on apace, and death took toll of the explorers, turn for turn, as it had done on that awful night in the Teremakau. Howitt went down the coast as far as Karangarua, saw Okarito, Totara, Hokitika, Arahura, the Waimea, but, except for a few ounces and "colours," picked up here and there, saw but little of the wondrous wealth that was so soon to come out of the memorable fields associated now and for all time with those famous names. Stationed once more at Lake Brunner, he suddenly lost his life in its treacherous waters. Townshend took up the running, and one melancholy day he undertook to bring a whaleboat from Hokitika into the Grey over the bar. All went well till he got to the bar, and there the boat swamped in the breakers, and another brave explorer was lost with two of his men.

But the spirits of the gold imprisoned in the earth for so many ages were getting near their deliverance. The diggers were approaching. There flashes into the story about this time a name famous in every rush of the early days of the coast—the name of Hunt. Marching with the various survey parties, he had spent much of his spare time in prospecting; and so well did he spend it that he took to the business of prospecting altogether. He roamed the Buller Valley, extending his seekings as far as the Wairau Saddle. He was seen on the coast as far down as Okarito. He appeared in the character of discoverer of a payable goldfield first at the Hohonu. The Maori, however, had been before him, as the name "Maori Point," given to the first real diggings south of the Grey, attests. Still, the fame of Hunt is on solid ground. This was on the Greenstone, above its junction with the Hohonu, and it was the first goldfield in those parts. Very soon it was officially declared—by Mr. Revell—that the population

there was up to the average of £2 per day. By that time—somewhere about April, 1864—there was a find at the Grey. The place was then known as Blaketown, from a skipper of the Milesian breed who set up his tent there, opened a store, and became a power on the “Coast”—so many and so racy are the stories told of his goings-on. With him came another pioneer of the goldfields, one Reuben Waite, who may be termed the father of storekeeping in the west country. A great repository, moreover, was he of the early history of the Coast. The rush that then set in on the Grey looked serious, but it drained quickly away. Nevertheless, the Grey country became rich and frequented later on, as is the manner of rich countries in times of the gold-fever.

The find at the Greenstone decided the rush, on the watch everywhere with restless longing. There were people in the Canterbury Province who were not pleased with the turn of events. Here is an extract from the *Lyttelton Times* of the period. On the 30th July, 1864, that journal said, “If a goldfield is, after all, to be forced upon Canterbury without the consent, and contrary to the expressed desire, of the settlers, they must nevertheless submit to fate; and should the natural feelings of discontent, swelling up in their prudent bosoms when Fortune’s golden favours are thrust into their hands, be somewhat hard to subdue, the consolation exists that the goldfield has turned up in the remotest corner of the province.”

The reply the digging fraternity made to that declaration was found by Hunt in a few days. That explorer had been assaulted by some disappointed men, who, having failed to find the gold they had sought in his tracks, which they had followed up, had taken the thought to proceed to Christchurch. On the road they met a great stream of men making for the new field with all conceivable alacrity. What that alacrity was the contemporary accounts leave us in no sort of doubt whatever. Most animated of all these is the descrip-

tion placed on record by Julius von Haast in his report of the exploration he had undertaken at the request of the Provincial Government. It is scarcely necessary to quote it, as it is evident from all that has gone before that one rush is very much like another. Enough that the gold-seekers of Otago had by that time made up their minds that the west was the golden country for them to reach at any price.

They came in their numbers. The rivers took their toll of them; the forests impeded them; they suffered, and some of them turned back in their tracks. But the rush got there somehow. Nor was the stream of eager, excited men fed from Otago alone. Nor was it fed from New Zealand altogether. Sailing-vessels and steamers brought their freights from Melbourne, and soon the "Coast" was alive with prospectors, diggers, and camp-followers galore.

While the rush was coming from the outer world the men in possession of the field started out to prospect the country in right good earnest. By the month of October, 1864, there were seven hundred men on the new field, and of these the larger number, after a turn in search of their luck on the Greenstone, had set out to prospect the country to the south, encouraged by the reports of numerous finds. Reuben Waite and others having established stores, there were bases. Many were disappointed, but it was no "will-o'-the-wisp" that led on the adventurers—solid returns rewarding the enterprise of the brave. First, the Waimea was opened up, and there was a roaring time; then there was word of a great deposit unearthed at the Totara, and diggers went off in increased numbers to that new field. Then the traveller had a turn. One day it was one place; another day it was another; and every day there was somebody to shoulder swag and make a bee-line through the wilds for somewhere; and the somewhere always rewarded somebody, while it disappointed somebody else.

On the 7th of December, 1864, Captain Leech took the steamer "Nelson" into the Hokitika River over the bar.

It was the first time such a thing had been done, and the feat proved to be epoch-making. The town—up to that time there never had been a town—the very name of the place had been uncertain, and a thing about which men differed with radical difference; but from the hour of the entry of the steamer “Nelson” light descended upon the fortunes of the river. Mr. Revell, the Warden (the Canterbury Provincial Government was as mindful of its duty as the Government of Otago had been before it, and had arranged for the maintenance of order and the security of all just rights), sold a great number of business sites, and Hokitika became easily the centre of the West Coast goldfields. Among the first buyers of sites were Cassius, and Comiskey, and Waite.

The Waimea filled up with men doing well; the Ararua gave phenomenal returns; rushes swept up to Lake Kanieri, and the Kokotahi became big in the records of gold-finding. Up to the summits of the “Divide” poured the rush, and down to the sea it spread its increasing numbers. Back it went towards the Greenstone, and vast rewards greeted the new comers, who had passed the spot in the hopes of brighter things further south. The Grey claimed more in the rush onwards, and those who listened to the claim had no cause to regret their decision. Back the rush swept towards the Buller, and the Golden beaches were discovered which all had passed with the air of men fleeing from the pestilence. It really seemed that the more men came to the place from overland and from oversea, the more wealth there was for them to earn. The “waiting spirits” had cause to rejoice, for deliverance came to them faster than they could have ever dreamed in their ancient prison-houses. The report was spread that every river and every creek of the west carried gold, only waiting for the pick of the adventurous miner to harvest the tremendous spoil. Clerks in the eastern country dropped their pens; farm labourers abandoned the plough-reins; the blacksmith cleared out of his forge; the waiter left the guests of the patron lamenting.

But the weaklings returned even quicker than they had gone over. It was lucky, for otherwise the work of the eastern cities must have come to a standstill.

The Hokitika River became soon a great emporium of trade. Fifty vessels were to be seen any day in the crowded basin; hundreds of publichouses arose as if by magic in the streets; expeditions started from its business places at every hour of the day and night for every conceivable place north, south, and east. Banks set up their offices, packers drove a roaring trade, the storekeeper was busy from morning till night. Newsvendors had a great time, men giving as much as 5s. for a copy of the Melbourne *Argus*. What with the incoming people from every part of Australasia, and the movement that never ceased within the field, kept going by reports of fabulous richness newly discovered, the place was ever in a state of tremendous activity. Such was Hokitika in the early days of 1865.

The Grey had grown also. The name of Blaketown was discarded for the name of the popular Governor; the town was laid out, and land was selling, as at the more southern township, by the foot. The same thing happened at Westport. Before the end of the year named, the Buller Valley, from the mouth of the river to a point some miles above the Lyell, was yielding gold to all who asked in earnest and in the right manner, which in those days was not a manner presenting any sort of difficulty. All the historic spots were in full blast by this time. Addison's Flat and Charleston, and all the other places on the Coast between Cape Foulwind and the mouth of the Grey. From the latter place also were all the great finds unearthed — Salt-water Creek, Brighton, and other spots whose history had become a realised dream of avarice. The rush swept resistless up the Arnold, past Lake Brunner, up the Grey, right on to the Ahaura, and every place it reached became a ward of the great city of El Dorado. Up the Little Grey it tore its way, and on the other side of the river there was the hum of mining industry, by

Blackball and Brunner, and all the places where gold was waiting to be unearthed, and was unearthed.

The roar of discovery arose into the air among the mountains, and did not stay in the upper air alone. It was met by the roar from the Buller Valley—the roar that advanced up the Inangahua. Presently the diggers from Big River, fabulous in its wealth, met the men who had got the colour just as rich at Boatman's, at Antonio's, at a hundred other places of fame and profit. Out of this meeting of the roaring, joyous workers was to come Reefton and the quartz era; but in those days men would not stop to think about the delusive quartz. The pick, and the shovel, and the cradle, and the long-tom engaged all their attention, and it was some time before they would even hearken to the suggestion of the water-race. Men were too independent to think about mechanical assistance in those happy days. Easy alluvial was the glory of the sixties; quartz waited for the seventies and the eighties.

Suddenly into all this Babel of joyous sound there came the boom from Okarito. Away scampered the rush, or as much of it as was not making its fortune in the place appointed by all-conquering luck—wherein lay the difference between this field and all other fields known in New Zealand—and, lo! vast masses of gold were won from that most famous of the fields of that glorious time. Further south went the beacon-fire of successful search, and gold filled up the escorts beyond the dream of the most feather-brained of the seekers. It was the time for the poor man to make his fortune by the sweat of his brow alone. And alone he faced the splendid prospect, enduring, braving, working, sharing with his mates, squandering with all the world. As it had been in all the goldfields of which the world has any record, so it was with this goldfield. That which was won lightly went frequently lightly; and without hesitation, or difficulty, or diminished hope the losers went out to ask Fortune for more chances, and got them!

In the first month of Okarito those lucky men had picked up gold to the value of £200,000. That was the record yield; but there were others nearly as good. In some instances there were records, authentic enough, of a pound weight per day per man. Von Haast, when he got his scientific eye on the country, went all over it in the thorough manner for which all his work was distinguished, and likened the country to the Ural, which had been worked by the Russians for years without any signs of exhaustion.

But all this did not progress all at once like the flood-tide of the ocean. There were ebbs and flows. Every one could not be successful every time, even in El Dorado. There were therefore disappointed men, and streams of them returned, reporting that the field was overrated, and there was some suffering and more discontent. The progress was a see-saw. Still, in the end, the field proclaimed its wealth through the escorts and the steamers that carried away the golden harvests, and the imprisoned spirits were released in wholesale fashion.

All this time the Government of the province and the General Government of the colony were true to their duty. The latter had to arrange for the Customs revenue, and the former for the order, good government, and security, and, above all things, for the access and the due furnishing of all the departments of civil life. That the work was done well and adequately is one of the glories of the history of that field, just as it had been the glory of the field in the Otago chapter of the story of gold-finding in New Zealand. The western police were organized early under Inspector Broham; the Wardens, after the example of Mr. Warden Revell, showed how it was possible to improvise good work under difficulties; Mr. Rolleston, the Provincial Secretary, was early in the field seeing to things personally; and Mr. Commissioner Sale—a man among men—working like a giant, won fame that has proved imperishable in that school of manhood in which he took a leading part.

Inflexibly just, tactful, energetic, genial, and, moreover, with endurance of the order that men regard as phenomenal, he did his part. In the engineering department the work was worthy of the men who had planned that great work, the Lyttelton Tunnel, with nothing behind them stronger than a population of eight thousand people. They planned and carried through the magnificent West Coast Road. It is a feat of engineering of which any old country might be proud. It remains to-day a monument to the practical character and self-governing capacity of the race into whose hands fell that choice gift of Providence, the Golden Territory of the West.

Does any one wonder that the population of the early period of gold-getting was independent and eager? He will cease to think that way when he turns to the gold-returns. In 1864 the field of the Aorere and the Wangapeka—the Nelson field—had pride of place with a return of gold to the value of £55,841; while the West, represented chiefly by that first find of any importance—the find in the Hohonu Creek—was credited with a modest aggregate of £5,560. The next year what a turning of the tables! Nelson had receded to £47,030, and the Golden West had leaped up to over a million sterling, the figures being £1,127,370. In 1866 came the record year of the West. While Nelson in that year receded to £29,643, the West had made another spring upwards—this time to over two millions sterling—the exact returns showing an aggregate of £2,018,874. That was the greatest yield in any one year of any of the goldfields of this country. It enables one to realise the excitement of the days of the golden harvests, and to estimate the splendid work done by all the departments of civil, political, and commercial life in a period of tremendous urgency. There was one, and only one, set of bushrangers, and they were quickly dealt with; provisions and all necessaries of mining life were said to be as cheap in Hokitika in 1866 as they were in any part of the colony; there was regular communication

with the outside world and throughout the country which two years before had been the death-trap of the most intrepid explorers. Truly, that was a great chapter in the history of colonisation. Before taking leave of the Golden West, it is only necessary to add that when in 1873 the aggregate yields of the western fields had risen to £11,671,049, they found an orderly community well established in settled industry. It is interesting to note at the same time that Nelson, which had led the van for some years in the race of gold-discovery, had not attained by the end of the above year to an aggregate of half a million sterling—the export in the aggregate being officially returned at £425,586.

Having followed the great currents of discovery in the Middle Island, we must not omit to notice a little episode which seemed destined at one time to add largely to the output of the golden country. It was in 1860 that gold was first found in the Marlborough District, and three or four years later there sprang into being in the place a full-blown goldfield, with all the official and commercial furnishment complete. This was the famous Wakamarina.

It was a goldfield which seemed to have grown up after the manner of that gourd which so astonished the prophet. Mr. Preshaw,* the banker, tells us in his notes how he went on horseback over the Maungatapu Range from Nelson on a gold-buying expedition. He reached Havelock in due course, to find the place all bustle and excitement. Diggers, he says, were flocking in hundreds from Otago and other parts of New Zealand. The diggings (Wakamarina) were some twenty miles from the township, at a place called Deep Creek, and there was a great time in the little place.

No wonder. The cause is writ large in the return of the export, which shows that in the year 1864 the diggers dug up 100,000 pounds' worth of the precious

* "Banking under Difficulties; or, Life on the Goldfields of Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand." By a Bank Official. 1888.

metal, and supplemented the amount in the year following with some £32,000 more, making a total of £132,000 in the two years.

The diggings, said Mr. Preshaw, were not sufficiently extensive or remunerative to support a large population. There was, besides, the news from the "Golden West," which in the year 1865 was thrilling the whole of the colony with the handsome fortunes of the lucky men who were striking it rich in all directions, as has been seen in the preceding pages. The prospectors and the holders of poor claims, therefore, set off without beat of drum for the West, taking ship from Picton some, while others started by way of Nelson, under the idea that the facilities were better in that older and better-organized town.

Among those who took that road were the members of the unfortunate party that fell by the way into the hands of Sullivan, Burgess, and Co. It was on the 8th June that their party left the Deep Creek. Felix Matthieu (hotelkeeper), John Kempthorne, James Dudley (storekeeper), and James de Pontius (digger) took leave of their friends that morning, camped at the Pelorus Bridge the same night, and the next day were seen by some people on the road on the far side of the Nelson Flat. After that no one saw them alive, except the bush-rangers. They were missed, and the murderers were soon arrested, having incurred suspicion by selling gold in somewhat large quantities. Sullivan made confession; the bodies were found, and there was a tremendous funeral, Nelson turning out to a man. The rest of the story need not be told. Enough that the murderers got their deserts.

Mr. Preshaw throws an interesting sidelight on the story in that part of his memoir which deals with his Australian goldfields experiences. Being at Kidd's Hotel, at Kiandra, in the days of the Snowy River rush, he had various experiences, of which the most amusing used to occur regularly at meal-times. There was great difficulty in serving the hungry people who came in daily clamouring for dinner. They had to be fed in

batches, and often the word "Off" seemed to be the only dinner a man was likely to get. Curses and confusion were the order of the day with the short-tempered men of the pick and shovel, and things would have gone but poorly every time but for the address, ready wit, and never-failing good humour of a waiter—a Frenchman named Felix—who constantly restored order by his readiness and versatility. The gaiety of Felix was contagious, and Felix was the prime favourite with hundreds of the men of the rush. Drinkers, gamblers, hard-working men, officials, bankers, police, lawyers, all had a good word for Felix. Alas, poor Felix! His is the first name on the list of the victims of the Maungatapu gang set down above. He had come with the rush from oversea, had prospered, set up a hotel at the Deep Creek, and was on his way to his beloved *patrie* to enjoy his good fortune. Alas, poor Felix!

Another sidelight on the Maungatapu assassins from the same pages is not without its interest: "During the short stay of Burgess and party in Nelson," says Mr. Preshaw, "they disposed of the greater part of the gold taken from the murdered men to the different banks. Levy visited the Bank of New South Wales (Mr. Preshaw's bank), and concocted a plan for murdering all the inmates of the establishment and robbing the bank. The bank was visited by each of the men in succession, and, as they all concurred in the feasibility of the scheme, it was agreed that Levy should proceed to Melbourne to procure the necessary disguises, and that the other three should remain in Nelson. The plan of murder and robbery was this: That when all was ready one of the gang, well dressed for the occasion, should gain access to the manager in his private room, just before closing, while others of the gang should be in the bank on pretence of business, and on the closing of the doors overpower the officers and murder them in a manner which would give no alarm. It was intended to bury one of the bodies, leaving the others in the bank, in order to give the appearance of one having murdered the rest."

Perhaps it was just as well for Mr. Preshaw and his brother officers, and sundry other persons, that the gang betrayed itself by its reckless disposal of its booty, and was arrested before doing further mischief.

When the rush departed from the Wakamarina the place was not quite deserted. Some were on good gold, and were not absolutely reckless. These stayed on. The passing years, however, did not tend to the increase of gold-mining; quite the reverse. For example, the export from the field last year (1905) was of the value of only £3,845. Moreover, the amount credited to the little field in the return of the gold exported to end of 1905 from the first discoveries of 1857 is £346,637—more than double the output credited in the first two years of its opening rushes. The field kept going, at all events. In the late "sixties" and the early "seventies" a good deal of capital was sunk in cutting water-races and arranging for hydraulic-sluicing work. Throughout the whole history the miners have held positively to the theory that there are reefs of great richness from which the alluvial of the early days was supplied in rich abundance, and that these reefs have only to be found to produce once more gold equal to the dreams of avarice.

We must now return to the North, to the fields of quartz-mining, scenes of the earliest discoveries in New Zealand. In those early days of the "fifties" there were no less than three thousand men congregated on the Hauraki Goldfields. It was the Coromandel portion of the peninsula, supposed to be very rich; but, as noted in the chapter of the discoveries of that region, the rush melted away early. The stories from the other fields of the colony, together with the Native troubles, combined to effect the depopulation to what we are now accustomed to believe the completest extent. The fortunes of the Coromandel field did, indeed, sink for a while quite out of sight. The gold returns for the colony tell the story without any circumlocution. Great were the hopes of the big rush of 1857. That rush, however, only produced an export of the precious metal to the

value of £1,102; and the three following years stand absolute blanks in the gold records. In 1862 the first recovery appeared with a modest £4,098; 1863 followed with a sudden increase to £13,853; the output of 1864 fell to £10,552; 1865 went up to £17,096; the following year maintained the yield, and 1867 took it up to £18,277. The last was the year in which the first discoveries were made at the Thames, and the following year (1868) the export of the precious metal ran up to £168,874. It was no wonder men talked. The days of boom, however, were yet far distant, comparatively speaking.

It was in November, 1861, that the Coromandel field became once more the scene of operations. The district had been deserted, and therefore the agreements with the Natives about mining on their lands had lapsed, and everything of that kind had to be done over again. The task was placed in the hands of the Chief Land Purchase Commissioner—it is the first and only appearance in goldfields history of the well-known figure of Sir Donald McLean. The Land League of the Maori was then in full blast. The task was therefore by no means easy; but it was not insuperable to a man of the McLean force, who managed early to conclude an arrangement for permission to mine over the famous Tokatea Block for £500 a year. This was soon after the inauguration of the King movement. The success, very creditable to the McLean prestige, was followed up by further deals with the Natives in the neighbourhood, extending the area of prospecting, which is really all that mining was at that period. In 1862 Coromandel was proclaimed a goldfield, with Mr. H. Turton as Commissioner; and a Victorian expert, Mr. Brackenbury, coming over at the invitation of the New Zealand Government, soon after gave a certain vogue to the field by the very able report he made of it. In 1863 there was more Native trouble, and the field is described in the official reports of the time as deserted. But this must have been a comparative term, for the annual export returns from the Auckland Dis-

strict continue to acknowledge gold—over 4,000 pounds' worth in 1862; nearly £14,000 in 1863, the year of the supposed desertion; over £10,000 in 1864—a drop which explains the talk of desertion; £17,000-odd for each of the years '65 and '66; and over £18,000 for '67. The Coromandel was the only field at the time, it must be remembered, the next field, the Thames—which became, or course, the field of the big excitements and the great stories and the phenomenal luck—opening only in 1867.

The discrepancy between fact and official description may be found in the character of the work on this gold-field. The bulk of the gold came from the Kapanga Mine, a quartz-mine taken up by Robert Kelly and party in the year 1862, and worked on shares for some time. It was some little while before a company was formed—certainly not before the end of the panic caused by the Native disturbances; but the significance of the story of this mine is that all through the period of the panic and so-called desertion the yield of gold was constant. It was successfully worked, says the official account, for five years; large dividends were paid; a company was formed; and the whole area became known as the Kapanga Mine. The shaft during this time was sunk to a depth of 170 ft. These dates bring the history of the mine to 1867, demonstrating clearly the fact that the Coromandel field was, if deserted, certainly gold-yielding, without a break in the continuity. It is a coincidence that the depth was found too great just when the Thames discoveries were beginning to dazzle the world. Such was the case, however, and, as the public attention was chiefly monopolized by the newer field, the attempt to raise fresh capital for enabling the Kapanga management to cope with the increasing depth of the workings, and the increasing quantities of water to be dealt with, naturally met with no response. The mine was abandoned, and the machinery sold and removed to the Thames. Three or four years later an English company was induced, on the strength of the good times

of the past, to take up the mine and expend £100,000 upon its development. This company in the course of the next fifteen years paid £16,000 in dividends. The Coromandel field, being confined to the one mine during the years of the panic, naturally did not bulk large in the public mind. Indeed, there are few who are aware that the thread of gold export was kept up by the field as well as it was.

In 1864 the Maori, who had been "out," was tired of his amusement. His young men had been "blooded"; he had discovered that discretion, especially in the form of diplomacy, was the better part of valour, which, considering the fighting-capacity of the Maori, is really saying a great deal for the finesse of his diplomacy, and he wanted to settle down once more into a peaceful subject of "Te Kuini Wikitoria." So Mr. James Mackay got his marching orders once more for the district, and used his persuasive powers to such purpose that much information as to the finding of gold became the property of the Government, and there was some successful negotiation about opening the lands of the "tangata Maori" to the entry of the anxious digger. Soon after this, Colonel Chesney, the future authority on military tactics, wrote a report for the Government, in which he informed them of the discovery by him of alluvial gold in the neighbourhood of Te Aroha. The district named was, however, in too disturbed a state, and the expedition arranged by Mr. Mackay had to be abandoned; otherwise it would have been discovered that the field was not alluvial at all, but essentially quartz. The colonel's authority as a gold-finder was not as high as his authority as a tactician. Still, the gold was there, and the Ohinemuri district in later years became very pronounced as a great El Dorado. But that is a story to be told later on.

During these times it was as well that there was not much of a rush. There were many things requiring settlement—questions of detail about the payment of miners' rights and prospecting licenses, and timber-

cutting, the reservation of kauri (the value of which was well known to the Maori), the respecting of the boundaries of those owners who refused to allow the entry of the pakeha on their lands, the reservation of all the "tapu" places, the realisation of the fact that the Maori who did permit mining was not selling his lands, but only granting the right of mining thereon. It was a large and complicated mass of detail, which a rush of the old headlong order, in which nothing counted but the furious quest of gold, would have infallibly converted into a *casus belli*. To understand the difficulty of the problem presented by the land titles, it is only necessary to quote from Mr. Mackay's report: "The principal Native-land owners in the Thames district are the tribes Ngatipaoa, Ngatiwhanaunga, Ngatimaruru, and Ngatitamatera. The claims of these people extend over the east and west shores of the Hauraki Gulf, and as far south as Katikati, on the east coast, and to Te Aroha Mountain and Waitoa Valley, on the Thames. Their lands are very much intermixed, and there is hardly a tribal boundary which has not been the subject of disputes for some generations past. In addition to the tribes above named, there are the Ngatiporou, who own land at Harataunga (Kennedy Bay) and Mataroa, ceded to them by the Ngatitamatera; the Tawera, who hold a block at Manaia, given to them by Ngatimaruru for assistance in war; and the Ngatitai, who reside at Maraetai and the Wairoa."

This painstaking officer might have added the fact that the question was further complicated by the tenets of the Land League, extensively held—to the division of tribe against tribe, and hapu against hapu, and family against family—effectually barring all commerce with the pakeha in land for all purposes whatever. The complication was further increased by the presence of many adherents of the Hauhau fanaticism, which, whatever else it was, certainly was animated by the deadliest hatred of the pakeha. Under these circumstances it is a wonder that any opening was ever obtained in those

times from the Native owners. There were a few Natives well enough disposed to deal with the pakeha, and the payments of gold revenues appealed very forcibly to the "tangata Maori," making by their substantial regularity a growing attraction for a sensible race that could appreciate the honourable observance of bargains, and understood the strictness with which justice was done by the newcomers in all things. It was a certainty of the future, of course, that the prompt payments and the settlement of all disputes on the basis of justice would settle all the Native difficulties. But the future is not the present. Had the Land Purchase Commissioner and his officers and the goldfields officials not been men of rare tact and uprightness, and possessed of a fine sense of justice, no amount of future certainties would have got over the initial difficulties of the Native titles and their incidental rights. Even the good qualities of the officers would have failed had there been the usual pressure of the rush. But the rush was away in the wilds of the southern west, and in the adventurous quest of gold in the still wealthy countries of Otago. In the intervals of the strenuous pursuit echoes reached them faint and feeble from the North, and were unheeded. When the time came for a louder note, and the unresisting attraction that ever follows the familiar sound, all the preliminary work had been done, fields were opened up on terms understood by both sides and rigidly adhered to, both in the letter and the spirit. In a word, the ground was prepared for the great boom of prosperity which was about to rush over the "Golden North" by the skill, tact, and rare public spirit of a grand body of public officers. The services of these men should never be forgotten by the people for whom they did such noble work. Let it be remembered, in addition, to their undying honour, that not a man of them all strayed away into the flowery path of personal advancement. In the midst of wealth showering around beyond the dreams of avarice these upright public servants remained disinterested and clean-handed from the first

to the last. It would be a vast generalisation to say that such a thing is not to be seen in the history of any but an Anglo-Saxon country. But it is correct to say that the most recent European example—that of the Belgians in the Congo—is a remarkable contrast. That these results were obtained almost in the midst of a great war between the two races adds greatly to the wondering respect for their fine performance. The echoes of Rangiriri and Orakau were yet in the air in all their freshness; many of the men who had fought in those memorable fights were back among their tribesmen, with the powder not yet wiped off their musket-barrels, and the smart of wounds received in action gave point to much of the anti-pakeha declamations of the period. Nevertheless, these sterling public servants brought the big goldfield out of a situation which ought by all the rules of all the probabilities to have closed it against the pick of the digger for a generation.

Even as it was, the opening of the peninsula was an affair of gradual development, spread over a term of years. Coromandel was reopened in 1864; Thames, as will be presently seen, in 1867; Ohinemuri did not follow suit until 1875; and, finally, Te Aroha in 1880. The wonder is not that the opening was so protracted, but that it was not postponed for very many years more.

The opening of the Thames goldfield was heralded by reports, rumours, and explorations in the teeth of Native precautions. Many a party of adventurous men were brought back under the escort of Maori warriors, scornful, and sometimes only restrained by the power of their chiefs from condign punishment of the trespasser. But there was enough to found a general opinion upon that the Kauaeranga country was the "makings of a nice goldfield." About the beginning of 1867 the European population began to agitate, and the enterprising newspapers began to cater for the news wanted by their readers. Small steamers trading to the Thames—for trade there always was—began to bring back accounts of "our special correspondent." He had no

wires to flash his information through to his principals in time for special editions and the other luxuries of modern journalism: he had to rely on the irregular "hooker" which sailed whenever cargo offered; nevertheless, "our own" came to be looked for before the middle of the year named. The spirits of the gold imprisoned in the great reefs of the Thames country, among the rocks of Moanataiari, the Waiotahi, and the Tairua plucked up heart of grace, seeing deliverance at hand. Presently the noise of public meetings in the capital of the North—still the capital, though a political move had deprived it of the name—and of the resolutions they passed, came to them on the wings of the rumour-laden breezes of the Gulf. Prospects at the Karaka Creek were, on the strength of a special report, much discussed. "Diggers on the spot express some confidence that payable gold will be found." So ran the legend which produced an excited public meeting. It was held at the Queen's Hotel, Auckland, and was remarkable for two things—first, the statement of one Alexander, which referred to the fact that for eighteen months past there had been stories from the Thames field. To be sure, Mr. Alexander scoffed at them all, pointed to the fact that the Coromandel Gold Company (Captain Daldy, chairman) had just been wound up, as an instance of the downfall of more serious things in the world of mining than mere rumours such as made up all they had to go on at the Thames for an appeal to the gullible outside world. This establishes in a nutshell the fact that big prospecting had been done. The other remarkable thing about that meeting is the acceptance by a large majority of the principle that the Maori ownership must be recognised in every possible way. Mr. Jerome Cadman—father of the late Sir Alfred of the name—was the man who brought up the matter first. He confronted the claimants of the opposite theory, who were for rushing the lands of the Maori without further parley on the theory of "Sacred Miners' Rights," undisturbable by aught in the nature of freehold, lease-

hold, communistic, or any other kind of title. Mr. Cadman, standing up before this meeting, asked in firm accents, "Supposing I were an owner of property, what right has any man to encroach upon it without my authority?" The chairman said, "Certainly," and the meeting, after the speech upon this text, broke into cheers loud and long. It was a good prelude to the opening of the most sensational of the goldfields of the colony.

Another sentiment of that strenuous, outspoken Mr. Cadman it is well to remember here. He said at the same meeting that the Maori war, not long ended, was unjust and insensate, winding up with the declaration that "it would have been far cheaper and better to have paid cash for all the land the war had given us." It is a pithy sentence, in which is concentrated all the criticism that could possibly be hurled at the policy which, proceeding by way of war, when the best interests of both races required unbroken peace, confiscated the lands of the Maori without benefiting the interests of the pakeha.

Very soon after that meeting the Government resolved that the time had arrived for negotiations with the Maori owners. The opening of the goldfield that followed these negotiations is the most expeditious on record. Dr. Pollen and Mr. Mackay started from Auckland for the Kuranui on the 21st July, got back to Auckland on the 27th, and proclaimed the goldfield on the 30th of the same month. There were a hundred prospectors on the ground; Mr. Mackay had staked out the channel for the small craft to reach the town-ship, and the latter was going ahead under a system of settled rents, with streets laid out on fine lines, and corner lots at a premium. A frontage section was £5, and the rent payable to the Maori owners was 6s. a foot. This was the first of the Town of Shortland.

In the neighbourhood there were shafts down 7 ft., "gold all the way down," with many other fables more or less authentic. There was disappointment that only

7,000 acres had been included in the negotiations, but that was swept away in the subsequent announcement that 100,000 acres had been made available, with more to follow, in all probability, on condition of care and self-restraint by the rush. The rush was, however, not too strong. It was even thought that the field would never carry more than two to four hundred miners. So much may be gathered from the vigilant sentinels in the Auckland newspaper offices. They had heard the tale of some "West-Coasters" who had settled down in the Thames district to something fairly decent in the way of a prospect, and hearing of the new proclamation had announced their intention of seeing for themselves, and, if the truth proved worthy of the rumours, of sending the truth to their friends on the West Coast, who had just passed their record year (1866) with a yield of £2,140,946, and were engaged in squeezing the next record yield of £2,018,874. The idea was disturbing. The sentinels of the Press, at once faithful to the local traditions, enjoined all sensible miners not to talk rashly of such things, but to bear in mind that the field was limited. At the same time, they kept up the local reputation for courtesy by adding that anything found over and above the requirements of three or four hundred men might be made the subject of cordial invitation to all and sundry.

All this time the men were laying the flattering unction to their souls that they had discovered an alluvial goldfield; Colonel Chesney had said so, at all events, for Ohinemuri; and between the Thames and Ohinemuri there could not be any great difference. Therefore, the reports from "our own" and all other sources talked of the prospects of sluicing, discussed the probability of finding bottom, and expressed chagrin that this bottom, so much desired, seemed to get further away with every report. The papers are full of the discussions provoked by the subject in those primitive days. Needless to say that the theories advanced on both sides of the controversy were more amusing than

scientific. About the middle of August the accounts from the field began to show agreement that the "bottom" was a fugitive bottom.

"The gold is exceedingly fine, more so than that found in the quartz of Coromandel. We can quite understand how it is that not a shovelful of the soil at the Thames can be washed without seeing gold when such quartz (and it is very rotten) becomes disintegrated and washed down the hills. The gold is left in fine, minute particles. It thus becomes widely diffused through the soil, and over it. Its specific gravity will not have been sufficient to cause it to reach bottom, as is the case with heavier gold in other places; and thus the bottom, when reached, may be found to be no richer, or even less rich, than the surface. Higher up the river towards the Aroha Mountain, and about Ohinemuri, we have reason to know that the gold in the quartz is coarse and nuggety, and that washdirt containing gold may be expected to be found at the bottom."—*New Zealand Herald*.

Early in the month a fairy tale was published in the city. The proprietor of the *New Zealand Herald* had got from his "own" the usual report by steamer, with the unaccustomed addition of a specimen from the Kuranui Goldfield. The proprietor at once took the specimen to his neighbour, Mr. Beck, a well-known jeweller, who subjected the same to due inquiry, expert and reliable. The result was the exposure in the jeweller's window of an ounce and a half of quartz, with a button of gold extracted from the same weighing 6 oz. This was the first discovery of the nature of the gold in the Kuranui, and it made a great sensation. This determined the public mind to give up expecting the poor man's alluvial and seek the speculator's quartz reefs. From that gold button to the half-million dividends of the Caledonian was but a jump of a year or two. The gold discovered by the alembics of Mr. Beck had come from the ground discovered by Hunt and party, known subsequently as the Shotover Claim. The four men — Hunt, Copley,

Clarkson, and White — were southern miners who had come from the Shotover, and were prospecting in the new goldfield of the Kuranui. Here is the story of their discovery, as narrated to the ubiquitous “own” of the *Herald* on the spot:

“On Friday last one of their number came in and informed his mates that he had found a decent prospect in the bottom of a blind gully. They proceeded further to follow up the prospect, and having satisfied themselves that it was good, after a deliberation amongst them, decided on pushing up the creek in search of a better prospect. They had not proceeded much further up the bed of the stream when Mr. White, who was leading up the creek, and who had proposed pushing ahead, was met by a barrier of stone rising perpendicularly above their heads to the height of 12 ft., and across the Kuranui Creek to either bank. Over the stone the water ran in a small fall. Looking at the stone they found it to be quartz, and, climbing by the crevices to the top, they stood upon the surface. They found it to be 9 ft. across. They returned back again and re-examined the surface of the stone. One of them then struck it with his pick, and the first blow brought a piece of stone in which the gold was clearly visible. Satisfying themselves that this was no extraordinary sample of the reef, they started back to the township and sought Mr. Mackay, who, having furnished them with their miners’ rights, proceeded back with them to the reef, and, together with the Warden (Mr. Bayley), saw their prospecting claim of 300 ft. square marked out. Further inspection satisfied the party that the reef, or rock, contained as many as four distinct leaders, which commenced on the face at only an inch or two in thickness, widened out within the reef to as many feet, and equally as rich in gold. That night the reef was rushed *en masse*, its bearings taken by candle-light, and all the available ground north-east and south-west was marked off in claims.”

A strange thing now happened, typical of the diffi-

culties of the field, of the quickness of resource, and the practical knowledge roughly in possession of the miners of the period.

"Then began the dispute as to whether that which was taken was really gold or only mica. Opinions differed: some thought it really mica; others pretended to do so, wishing to induce holders of claims to abandon the same as worthless. One man, anxious to put the metal to the test, brought down some quicksilver.

"The gold was placed upon it. It floated. The claim-holders looked blue; the sticklers for the mica theory were exultant.

"At this critical juncture a man named Barry rushed out and returned with a shovel, and, placing some of the gold upon it, held both over a fire till the shovel was red hot.

"The gold thus treated was again put in contact with the quicksilver, and, lo! it no longer refused to amalgamate.

"The sulphur in connection with the gold which the action of the heat had dispelled had been the cause of its non-amalgamating at first.

"We need not say," said the sympathetic Press philosopher and friend, "that a general feeling of joy and satisfaction was felt at the result." Adding with subtle sense of poetic justice, "We are glad to say that Barry has a claim next to the prospecting claim, and still more so that on trial 3 lb. of the stone yielded $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of gold."

Then followed some practical advice. There were hints of bad characters abroad, and a veiled suggestion of the need in a certain event of the formation of a Vigilance Committee; and it was evident that all was not gold that glittered even in this fine prospecting district, for the public was informed that there were no outcrops on the lines of possible reefs, but that the prospectors might have to sink shafts of fifty, or a hundred, or even two hundred feet before finding the precious gold-carrying quartz. With the addition of hints that machinery,

and experience, and capital would be required, it will be conceded that full warning was extended to all and sundry to think well before they embarked their fortunes in the promising ventures of the new El Dorado; also that ample time was secured to all who wished to make hay in the sun of opportunity.

This was the finding of the famous Shotover Claim. The fortunate shareholders did not just then start a company. They worked the ground for themselves, and in a comparatively short time took out enough to divide £40,000 sterling apiece, after paying all expenses. They floated a company after this, but never were the same returns obtained. It is one of the prize stories of the Northern Goldfields. The news of the find went speedily from Auckland to the South. Wellington tried to discount it, as a matter of course; but the southern men, who knew more about gold-finding, decided that the thing was good enough, and the stream of emigration began to set northwards. The digger always is trained to follow the sound of the big guns of prospecting.

The next two years were golden, exciting, fierce. Prospectors overspread the land. The first accounts report that the diggers are profitably employed overhauling numerous mountain-spurs that terminate in the flats. The majority are without quartz experience, and attention is constantly given to alluvial workings, which at this season (it was August, 1867) are not workable. The outcome was that valuable quartz reefs were predicted. This note was taken up, soon becoming the characteristic of the field. The newspapers are full of "Ranges full of reefs for miles," and there are statements about the place being about to be covered with "one of the largest rushes that has ever taken place in New Zealand." So the chronicle mounted ever to higher things. Machinery began to appear in various parts; batteries, and berdans, and appliances for winning the gold. Refractory ore soon began to assert itself, and various were the plans ventilated for coping with the same.

The year 1868 was remarkable for the sparkle of the *New Zealand Government Gazette*. That publication, never hitherto suspected of interest, became positively sensational. At first the change was of a modest character. But we notice the names of the old colonists in the lists of the new companies: the leaders of commerce and enterprise backing their opinion and taking the lead in the development of the goldfield. The very first company registered during the year is the Kuranui, Captain Stone, manager; prominent among the names of shareholders, F. Whitaker, D. Nathan, W. C. Wilson. Then we have the Thames Company, T. Morrin; and both of these stand at a modest capital of £10,000. The Tapu Company is not far off, with such names as Graham, Morrin, Buckland, McCosh-Clark, W. C. Wilson. Moanataiari comes out in June, with the names in evidence of T. Russell, Captain Hutton, McCosh-Clark. In September we observe the sensational name of Caledonian, after the honoured names of Reader Wood, Captain Hutton, and Major Heaphy.

Turning over the pages of the journal—what other than the old friend of the miner, the *New Zealand Herald*?—the eye strikes against a Governor's Speech. Parliament was being opened, and ordinary business was going on just the same as if there had been no El Dorado. It was the 1st June, 1868. "These singular fields continue to increase in importance, and reliable authorities prognosticate the extension of discoveries of like deposits throughout many parts of the North Island, which will give profitable employment to a large population. The bearing of this on the early pacification of and security of the country is important." The rose colour of the gubernatorial Speech, with its easy suggestiveness, had been discovered and exploited, it is clear, in those early days. Is it not long established that the genius of the Anglo-Saxon for self-government is extraordinary? "Extension of discoveries of like deposits throughout many parts of the North Island" is distinctly good. The broad generalisation from the small

patch of the Thames to the whole Island is a stroke of genius, and the pacification of the country follows as a matter of course. It would be interesting to read what the leader of the Opposition said of the touch of genius. But we are following the history of the goldfields of the country, not the fortunes of any particular party in politics. Besides, it is easy with both eyes shut to guess what the Opposition did say on that momentous occasion.

In September bigger things greet the expectant eye of the searcher of records. There is the *Gazette* entry of Shotover—White, Copley, Hunt, Clarkson. It is our old friend, the prospecting party, that found the reef in the creek and provoked the pegging-out of miles and miles of country. They have divided their “forty thou” apiece, and they are giving the public a chance to come in. They do it to the tune of £224,000—the capital of the company. Another name strikes one—Golden Crown—and we read the names of Logan-Campbell, McKelvie, Aickin—household words all in Auckland history. In this year, having roamed over the fascinating pages of the *Gazette*, we find on computation that there were registered 320 companies. Note the difference of the capital figures between January and September: £10,000—£224,000! We are marching.

Let us pass on to the next year of grace, 1869. The *Thames Advertiser* chronicles in the first week of January the doings of the various machines, which are on the field in great abundance, and in great demand. Prominent are the one-stamp batteries for the crushing of specimens, which play such an important part in the development of the time. There are also numerous batteries for general service, and crushings are done for famous companies—Alburnia, Eureka, Heldt. We note that the protection of the Christmas holidays expires on a certain day, and there is an invitation for tenders for 300 telegraph poles between Hamilton and Cambridge. There is also a far-off dying echo of the Titokowaru and Te Kooti troubles in the air that is to hear

them no more. It reminds one of the Governor's stroke of genius about the "pacification of and security."

There are 30,000 oz. shipped off in the first two months of the summer. A vigilant Press is down on a certain southern journal which had made unfair comparisons with the southern goldfields as to pride of place. The "V. P." ransacks the world for comparisons, dives into history, brings up everything but fable. It appears from these calculations that there are 6,600 holders of miners' rights on the field; that the aggregate yield of gold represents an average of 2 oz. per man per month. The wildest prosperity of Castlemaine, Bendigo, and Ballarat never ventured to do more than $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. a man a week. Silence!

But if there is to be silence there is to be also a policy of roads and bridges—the vigilant Press takes great care of that. But it does not do to let the world think the worst of us by reason of these wants, which concern only the backblocks, where pick and shovel and tin dish and proceeds of gunpowder blastings are all struggling together in a "Slough of Despond." Cast your eye over there, O Stranger! "There we have a town, steam-engines at work in considerable numbers, some thousands of men digging for gold, churches and schools erected, Volunteer corps formed"—think of it!—and they wearing the Queen's most swagger uniform, too—"and"—greatest luxury of all to the well-regulated Anglo-Saxon mind, with its instinct of self-government—"contested elections."

The Moanataiari rises into the scene, under the dominion of Gribble the King. He gets a little group of real El Doradoes round his first kingdom (Grand Junction), Hobson Park at their head. These amalgamated look proudly at their neighbours, all within 100 yards—Homeward Bound, Eureka, Inverness, All Nations, Pai Marire, Morning Star. The talk throughout these principalities is of the leaders and the reefs, and of the powers sitting in the mighty state of directories. There is a pleasant jargon of $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to the ton, and a

welcome jangle of 6 oz. breaking on the surface of a stream of awe-struck references to the glory of specimen-crushings running into thousands and thousands of ounces.

What a time the pencillers are having—gentlemen who start the day without breakfast, and end it with a dinner of courses and all the wines of the vineyard. The latter meal is paid for by the proceeds of their bow and spear. The bow is a long bow, and it is not theirs, by the way, but belongs to their allies the tipsters, who know everything about mines and other things. Their own weapon is the spear—a pencil wherewith they inscribe in a book the fate of the victims of the long bows of their allies.

Theirs not to reason tell,
Theirs but to buy and sell.
Into the purse of—well,
Pretty nearly everybody rode the six hundred.

They were in hundreds, truly; and a marvellous trade they did, these raiders, on sidewalks under shady verandahs, mining in the air; the diggers the while sweating in the distant drives, sending out material for the rumours of the time. The gambling spirit of the race was thoroughly aroused.

The talk is of Tookey's and the Long Drive, and other mighty ones of the gold-sodden earth. A turbine installation—modern word meant for something else, but quite sufficient for this—rises up in two places, with the inevitable count of tons and ounces. They kept down the tons in those days, and they kept up the ounces. Simple formula! Easy business! Jovial life!

There are also holidays. Jack never would be a dull boy if he could avoid it by the application of the ancient formula. Moreover, the gambling of the exchange was not enough to absorb the energy of the men who, when not in their claims, played for their chances every night of their lives. Euchre, sir, was the game of those turbulent days. For which reasons, too, there are races in the Thames Valley, at Parawai, hard

by Whakaurunga. The attendance is declared equal to anything in the world—the veracious chronicler for the local paper says it is even equal to the last Auckland Meeting. The daring journalistic mind had actually conceived the idea that the Thames was on the high road to an out-topping victory over the city on the banks of the Waitemata Stream. However, this was for the future. The real present view was the thing of moment. “In front, towering away to the north and south, are the mountains whose treasures of gold, hidden for ages and ages, we have all come here to gather. To the north the view is bounded by the hills beyond Shortland, marked by multitudinous cuttings and tunnels, while to the south is the great Aroha Mountain, inaccessible to the gold-digger as yet, and therefore much longed for. Westward, the hills of Wharekawa, the kahikatea forest of Turua, and the River Thames with its extensive mangrove and other swamps.” “The mangrove and other swamps”—especially those others—rather spoil the enjoyment of the scene. But, good Heavens! truth is the essence of good journalism. So what would you?

February brought new developments. Amongst the most interesting, the first sight of the famous Caledonian was given to an excited world. Thirteen tons, it was announced, had been crushed at a neighbouring battery, with a return of 77 oz. 2 dwt., and the remainder of the blankets was expected to bring up the average to 6 oz. to the ton. A big mob of companies was floated soon after this announcement. It was reported in the newspapers that Captain Massey's battery (the Pioneer) was being kept busily employed.

The Caledonian shareholders had a meeting in the office of the manager, Mr. Reader Wood. Of this it was said the next day in the vigilant newspaper, “The company's claim adjoins the celebrated Golden Crown, bounding that claim on three sides. There are numerous rich and paying veins of stone in the claim, which are now being worked, but the great prize in view of the

shareholders is the Golden Crown Reef, known to run into and through the company's ground. From careful surveys it is nearly certain that the Golden Crown can be reached at a depth of about 400 ft., and preparations for sinking this depth, and for all the winding and pumping incident to so great a work, have been made by the company. The main shaft (a splendid piece of mining work), 9 ft. by 4 ft., has already been sunk to a depth of 60 ft., and it is to be pushed on with energy. The company has purchased the new and powerful engine with the pumping and winding gear made in England expressly to the order of the Kapanga Gold-mining Company"—our unfortunate friend and pioneer of the Coromandel—"and Mr. Burrell, C.E., has been intrusted with the erection of the machinery. The object of the meeting was to provide additional capital for prospecting the enterprise to a successful issue. This was readily agreed to, and a resolution was passed authorising the issue of 250 new shares of £12 each, to be offered in the first instance to the present shareholders. The work now being carried out by the company is the largest undertaking yet begun on the Thames Goldfield. The prize is one of the greatest, and the means seem adequate to the end in view. We wish the spirited shareholders success in an enterprise which promises not only a large reward to themselves, but large results to the community in exploring auriferous ground 400 ft. below the level of the sea." This prize, it may be stated right here, reached to slightly over £500,000 in dividends in twelve months after they began to come in.

Then the Moanataiari got 800 oz. melted at the Bank of New Zealand, and naturally there was a big pegging-out of claims. This scene was on Tookey's Flat—historic place—and in the midst of the excitement caused by the findings, and the crushings, and the meltings it was announced that Lundon and party had struck a reef (Golden Crown). At once claims were pegged out in all directions through the township, and some of them even

extended below low-water mark. In a short time the whole flat, extending from Souter's battery to the Kuranui, was marked off for claims. All the signs of the rush were visible; men going about in every direction with pegs in their hands; the inhabitants of the houses in a state of alarm lest their dwellings should be invaded. "The proprietors of the Hauraki battery took the precaution of marking out the site on which the mill stands for mining purposes," and a number of householders took the same step.

In April appetising announcements appeared in large numbers. The Kuranui crushed 300 lb. of stone for 2,534 oz. of amalgam ("*crème de la crème*" was the remark in the paper); the Long Drive crushed 100 tons for 1,700 oz. of amalgam; a full share in the celebrated Wild Missouri Claim, Fiery Creek, Tararu, changed hands for £3,000.

There were aspirations for the right sort of training, and the more thoughtful of the community gave them voice. At a meeting held in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, at Auckland, Archdeacon Maunsell said, "The need of the young men ought to be thought of by statesmen and philanthropists—an education not of *hic, hæc, hoc*, but such as would lead to the highest excellence in mechanical art, geometry, geology." It is curious to read that the reverend gentleman harped even then on a theme which to-day is rather threadbare, but is harping vigorously still. "England," he said, "had neglected this matter, and found herself being outstripped by other nations in mechanical ingenuity. This was the kind of education necessary for a young country." When the Archdeacon had done, the Rev. Mr. Buller (author in later times of "Forty Years in New Zealand") sounded the deep note of "an appropriate, sound, and practical education."

In the midst of these excitements men found time to think of other things—for example, the flax industry. There was much excitement in Auckland at the invention of the "stripper," which gave that industry a

fillip from the northern city to the Bluff. At the same time, the aspirations of the votaries of "ironsand"—the predecessors of Mr. E. Metcalf Smith, of New Plymouth—were damped by the regret that "the difficulty of utilising to their utmost extent the valuable mountains of ironsand" appeared to be insuperable.

The journals of the time are taken up with various happenings. The announcement that the Kapanga Company had to be wound up, through inability to keep the machinery going, was a hint that even on a goldfield, in the midst of finds and crushings, "all is not gold that glitters," even when it is gold in the rich-looking quartz. The disputed ownership of the ground between the Waiotahi and Moanataiari Creeks told the same tale; the commotion caused by some news from Ohinēmuri, that the Natives were "moving in a mysterious manner," made the gloom deeper. Presently, Moanataiari retorted 502 oz. of gold from 130 tons of quartz, and the sky grew serene once more. Men even forgot that Colonel Whitmore's arrival in the neighbourhood of Taupo with 180 of his merry men, ready and eager for the fray, had but recently filled them with alarm.

In June an important announcement was made—nothing less than the discovery of a cheap and effective flux—the very thing for dealing with the refractory ores which had by this time frightened half the miners of the old school, and discouraged the other half. A sigh of relief passed over the land as men read the announcement of the "Monte Christo Gold-quartz Smelting Company." Thereon the enterprising journal: "A large furnace was built at Cox's Creek—wrong place, of course—but the result of the experiment has strengthened the theory that the separation of the gold by fire is not only the natural and, therefore, most efficient process, but that it will ultimately be found to be the cheaper. The one thing is an efficient flux. This, we believe, has been discovered by Mr. Element, and its efficiency is demonstrable; otherwise we should not have a company

of intelligent business men willing to take over the establishment and plant it upon the Thames Goldfield." What would the Hauraki have done without its newspapers in the days of its need for information and encouragement? A company was formed, with a capital of £20,000, in 4,000 shares of £5 each. From which it appears that the art of knocking "pars" out of the sub-editor is older than the Thames Goldfield of happy memory.

In June the Long Drive—referred to pointedly as "the claim in which the Duke of Edinburgh had invested his money recently"—bulked largely before the public. "One of the richest specimens ever taken from the Thames Goldfield is a piece of quartz exactly 10½ lb. weight, taken from the lode now being worked in the Long Drive Claim. It is broken in two pieces, and presents the appearance of stone completely saturated through and through with gold. The amount of gold contained in these two pieces of stone has been estimated, by the principle discovered by Archimedes"—good old battling journal!—"or as it is best known by the term 'specific gravity,' and is found to be just 36 oz. We have thus stone, in small quantity, yielding 66 per cent. of gold."

The history of this great claim could not be long withheld from the columns of a journal so enterprising as the *Herald*, and so equal to all the possible occasions. "Early, when the Thames Goldfield was opened, the Long Drive was commenced. For some time the original shareholders worked industriously along, but no return rewarded them. They drove far into the hillside, and at last struck quartz in which a little gold could be seen, and but little. Still, the claim continued to be worked, though by a different party (mark the pathos of this common vicissitude of mining experience) and still returned little, while others about it more recently opened gave good dividends. At last the lode was struck. Shares not worth £5 rose to £50, and a claim which for eighteen months struggled hard to hold its

way can now boast of being second to none on the Thames, and even to surpass Hunt's claim itself. It was at this price that the Duke of Edinburgh bought in. He has left here but a short time, and the shares have risen from £50 to £70, and stand now at £80, with an upward tendency. We hear that the lucky shareholders will receive this week a dividend of £7 per scrip."

A few days after this appeared it was announced that Tookey's claim had struck it rich again, and Mr. Brissenden brought up a parcel of specimens "quite equal in richness to the stone found in the Long Drive." All claims in the vicinity rose beyond the dreams of avarice at once. One comment of the share-market read thus: "One share in the Pride of Karaka Claim bought for £50 lately; an offer of some thousands refused."

Soon after the middle of that memorable June the Long Drive came to the front again. "A Further Lot of Specimens.—At the time of the steamer's leaving the yield of specimens was continuing, and the face of the drive looking richer than ever. When it is remembered that the whole of the specimens lately taken out of this claim, and which have brought it into such prominence, have been taken from the drive only, and that no 'stoping' whatever has been taken down, and that the gold has been followed in a winze for upwards of 60 ft., we can fully understand the great anxiety on the part of the public to buy shares." Good old journal again!

Above the quotations of the market rose the din of conflict. The Element flux process had found a rival, favoured by Mr. Editor. The leading article advocated the merits of the process of one Hagan, patented and used in California; pointed out that the cost for crushing a ton was \$1½, against £2; described the process as burning water, driving off sulphurets, &c.; insisted that the ore is crushed just half as quick, &c. The article appeared on the 19th June, and led to a controversy memorable in those days.

The inventor, Mr. Marmaduke Constable, came down upon Mr. Editor, horse, foot, and dragoons; chiefly urging that his flux, being close at hand and cheap, was sufficient to wipe off all the other advantages of the rival process, and claimed in addition a vast profit from the by-products.

The month ended in many things; a jumble of tunnels, leaders, pursuits, fevers, amalgamations, amalgams, retorts, complaints of lack of roads—a thing which seemed as able to send men beyond the verge of temper just as far as it does now. A pleasant note hummed through all: “consequent improved value of the shares something marvellous,” it was said of many claims, “unlimited field, future in proportion.” Long Drive: Once more the story of the claim is told. From the bad days of the start to the Duke’s purchase, and the price is brought up to £120. Pleasant details follow: since the last meeting 222 tons have been crushed at 20 oz., and there is £10,000 for the shareholders. In the first month the dividends have been 20s., 60s., 80s. The next week a specimen-crushing is forecasted to be good for a “divy” of 80s., and there are 250 tons ready at grass, very rich, for another substantial distribution.

There is a justifiable little boast—the whole of the development of this magnificent field has been the work of local capital; not a shilling has come in from abroad; New Zealand has done it all. There are, nevertheless, signs of the presence of the representatives of British and Australian capital. Among the names we notice that of Selwyn Smith and Co., of Melbourne. This is the gentleman who in after-years became the manager of the New Zealand Shipping Company in the first days of its steam experience.

The Golden Crown is heard of. It has struck a 4 ft. reef in the 70 ft. shaft; a quarter-share, below £20 a week ago, has gone up to £90. The claim banks 422 oz., the Kuranui 220 oz., for a fortnight’s work. The City

of Glasgow is described as growing worthy of its neighbour, the Long Drive; that claim gets 1,490 oz. from 439 lb. of stone. There is another crushing from specimens of 1,800 oz., and the comfort of shareholders is something very solid.

Every day (28th June) we continue to see the announcement of some one or more new claims scarcely heard of before showing themselves as likely to be worthy of rank with such crack claims as Golden Crown, Long Drive, Hunt's, Tookey's, and others—*e.g.*, Junction, All Nations, City of Glasgow.

A curious announcement is that 4 cwt. of stone from the Bay of Islands was crushed at the Kuranui battery, with the result of gold at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to the ton. One wonders whether the plates were not responsible for this gold, for no one ever suspected gold being found so rich (or at all) in stone from that part of the colony.

This was the golden era of the Thames—machinery in every place; fifteen thousand men scattered over the face of the country; cash in all directions; speculation and wealth in every house. The countries of the new finds were remarkable for great yields of gold, mixed metals, and huge reefs, the best of them yielding £6 and £100 per ton of ore; the worst, known as "buck reefs," having leaders intermixed, small and large, in all directions.

The great want soon felt was that of some smelting or treating process for the reduction of the refractory ores. The history is consequently much taken up with the fates of various plants for smelting, roasting, and chemical processes. The names occur to most of the men of the time readily—Lamonte's process, the New Era battery, Railey's, Element and Constable's flux, with by-products, such as tiles, &c. There were chemical processes of bromide-zinc, cyanide—the last not of the early days, but the most famous and potent of all, and therefore necessary to be mentioned in the history, and especially in connection with the story of the Waihi Company. The reports of the managers of companies

of the old time are full of the difficulties from this source, and the speeches of the chairmen of directors are many of them models of scientific review, under skilful prompting, foremost among them being the deliverances of the late Mr. Thomas Russell to the shareholders of the Waihi Company and the Waitekauri Company. These particulars are mentioned here, though out of the chronological order, merely to show to what heights of achievement the industry rose from the rough days when the assembled miners round Hunt's claim were stupefied by the refusal of gold to amalgamate, and charmed into something like a superstitious mood by the sudden success of Mr. Barry with the shovel and the fire. In the interval the Mines Department had grown into goodly scientific equipment, issuing reports the equal of anything of the kind in the world; and mining schools were established in various parts of the country, the benefits from which to the mining industry of the colony are perhaps beyond the reach of accurate calculation. Add to the work done by the colony for itself in the way of equipment and learning the numerous occasions of recourse to Swansea, Freiberg, Sydney, and California, and the story of the mining days will be complete. It is another proof of the thorough manner in which everything was done in this as in all other departments of colonisation in New Zealand.

Into the details of the early history of the goldfields of Auckland it is not necessary to proceed further. Nothing would be gained but repetition. Of the spread of mining to Ohinemuri, the opening of Te Aroha, Karangahake, and Waihi, bringing the circle of the mines almost to the Bay of Plenty, it would be pleasant to tell. The story is fascinating, especially the wondrous tale of Waihi, and how, from the famous conical mound of the first discovery, the property grew and grew until it took a place among the most famous mines in the history of the world, and ranks as one of the best-paying mines of the present day.

The returns of gold tell the story as well as the best

detail narrative. For the years of the expansion of the Coromandel-Thames country they are as follows:—

				£
1867	...	...	...	18,277
1868	...	...	...	168,874
1869	...	...	...	434,687
1870	...	...	...	319,146
1871	...	...	...	1,188,708
1872	...	...	...	369,341

The whole story is comprised in these figures, which tell of the early beginning, the mad rush upwards, and the swift descent from the lofty pinnacle.

Reviewing the period of prosperity, the "Handbook of Mines," published in the year 1887, gives some interesting figures. "The ores," says this authority, "found in the Thames Peninsula have been exceedingly rich." It proceeds to give the famous story of Hunt's Shotover Claim and its division of £40,000 apiece to its first four prospectors, and chronicles a dividend-aggregate to the company they floated of £15,000. We read about the Long Drive paying £82,000 in a few years; the Manukau, with "one of the richest shoots of gold recorded in the annals of quartz-mining, £15,750"; Golden Crown, £141,904, after a large division among the original shareholders before the company period; Caledonian, with £500,000; Moana-taiari—"from whose mine over 10,000 oz. of gold was got in one week—£117,993"; Nonpariel, £14,670; Kuranui, £41,277; All Nations, £41,445; Old Whau, £11,650; Cure, £17,000. Then, in addition, we read of the host of companies which kept the market alive and the shareholders and the speculators rejoicing—the Alburnia, Dixon, Middle Star, Queen of Beauty, City of London, Queen of May, Bird-in-Hand, Bright Smile, and the rest of the gallant host now forgotten. There stands the Prince Imperial (New) high in the record, with £60,000 paid away to lucky shareholders in three years; and the Cambria, with £48,000. Of these the first-named is an instance of the freaks of fortune: the claim, after spending a heap of money, stood idle for

years, was sold for £800; the new shareholders made a call of £450 to carry on with, struck it rich, and paid away £60,000 in dividends before they knew where they were.

Another vicissitude must be here told to enable the descent of this great goldfield to be understood. The Caledonian stands easily first in the records of the time as the highest dividend-payers, with its record of £500,000. After that sensational experience the company floated along with sharply diminishing prosperity until 1879, in which year it was sold by order of the Thames County Council for the sum of £2,000. The cause of the disaster was this: In 1875 the Government advanced £50,000 to the companies concerned in the main drainage scheme for draining, by means of the Big Pump, the principal mines in the vicinity of the Thames foreshore. Some of the companies interested (of which the Caledonian was one) became security for the repayment of the money, and mortgaged their holdings to the Government. On the abolition of the provinces in 1876, and the election of the Thames County Council, the Government handed over to that body the securities held by them; and the Council subsequently sold, under its power of sale as mortgagee, this company's claim, as well as the other claims similarly held as security. The names of these suffice to complete the tragedy of that pathetic sale—Golden Crown, Tookey, Imperial Crown. To read the story is like watching the great argosies of a vast plate-fleet go down among their labouring consorts in a raging sea.

The keynote to the story is in the above Big Pump. It requires but a few words. When the great claims reached down to the 400 ft. level or thereabouts the water began to be too much for them. For a while they manned pumps and made good weather, but, the water gaining, it became evident that no single mine would be able to cope with the universal trouble. First, various mines amalgamated to fight the enemy. Then there was an extended effort, as above narrated, with

a large subsidy from the Government, and the Big Pump appeared.

Towards the end of the century another Big Pump was inaugurated at a cost of about £120,000, the Government assisting with a subsidy of £25,000, the object being the unwatering of the whole field, the power supplied being equal to the task of pumping 2,000 gallons a minute, and pumping down to a depth of 2,000 ft. Pumping to this depth will enable the lower levels to be proved, in which case those great argosies of the old field that went down with so much pathetic circumstance may be found intact to yield up their treasures once again. The hope is that that which once was may be again, history repeating itself in millions. So mote it be! There is already a revival of the most encouraging kind. The yield from the Coromandel-Thames fields we have seen at £369,000 in the later seventies. By the middle of the eighties it had fallen to £222,000. The figures for the present century are:—

				£
1900	...	...	...	149,508
1901	...	...	...	102,243
1902	...	...	...	117,884
1903	...	...	...	95,000
1904	...	...	...	42,016
1905	...	...	...	106,034

The Waiotahi returns count for much of the sharp recovery shown here. It is therefore appropriate to quote the reference made in the last Mines Statement; it recalls the old stories of the field:—

At the Thames the principal interest centres in the Waiotahi Mine, where rich shoots of ore have been discovered. 4,986 tons of quartz was treated, and 2 tons 14 cwt. 1 qr. 12 lb. of picked stone, for a value of £73,884 9s. 7d., or an average return of £14 per ton over the entire production. The sum of £51,300 was paid in dividends. This mine has been one of the most consistent dividend-payers in the colony, and with the prospects in view should continue to give dividends for many years to come.

EXPORT OF GOLD to end of 1873. (Showing yield of the early days.)

Year.	Auckland.	Nelson.	Marlborough.	West Coast.	Otago.	Totals.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1857	...	40,422	...	...	...	40,422
1858	1,192	51,272	...	...	...	52,464
1859	...	28,427	...	...	...	28,427
1860	...	17,585	...	...	...	17,585
1861	...	24,552	...	...	727,321	751,873
1862	4,098	40,386	...	...	1,546,905	1,591,389
1863	13,853	37,120	...	...	2,380,750	2,431,723
1864	10,552	55,841	95,231	5,560	1,689,653	1,856,837
1865	17,096	47,030	30,814	1,127,370	1,004,163	2,226,474
1866	17,463	29,643	1,818	2,140,946	654,647	2,844,517
1867	18,277	35,918	1,978	2,018,874	623,815	2,698,862
1868	168,874	38,396	1,616	1,608,844	686,596	2,504,326
1869	434,687	42,524	2,664	1,269,664	613,456	2,362,995
1870	319,146	48,692	7,408	1,121,525	660,694	2,157,585*
1871	1,188,708	40,056	7,468	931,528	619,760	2,787,520
1872	369,341	32,700	8,238	690,296	630,696	1,731,261
1873	437,123	54,786	5,050	756,442	734,024	1,987,425
	3,000,410	665,350	162,275	11,671,049	12,572,480	28,071,684

* In this total is a sum of £120 credited to the Wellington District, which is not shown in the table.

GOLD-EXPORT for the Remaining Years of the Gold-production.
(These show the goldfields fluctuations at a glance.)

Year.	Auckland.	Nelson.	Marlborough.	West Coast.	Otago.	Totals.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1874	305,068	22,156	4,748	631,203	542,154	1,505,331
1875	262,156	17,866	4,636	635,480	487,632	1,407,770
1876	221,905	55,862	1,796	531,274	473,491	1,284,328
1877	403,627	21,092	3,197	612,823	455,341	1,496,080
1878	220,454	17,223	1,617	578,508	422,277	1,240,079
1879	154,295	11,424	3,460	571,061	407,868	1,148,108
1880	176,416	12,223	5,650	575,258	457,705	1,227,252
1881	141,326	3,039	4,531	509,971	411,923	1,080,790
1882	131,007	12,494	5,400	519,978	333,804	1,002,720
1883	163,618	7,724	2,524	467,152	352,334	993,352
1884	143,564	8,002	4,306	446,517	318,932	921,797
1885	170,416	10,337	2,160	471,325	294,378	948,615
1886	128,140	9,979	1,451	446,287	317,543	903,569
1887	121,564	10,829	3,759	395,430	279,518	811,100
1888	139,556	11,320	2,547	400,405	247,142	801,066

1889	113, 191	12, 310	20, 167	406, 451	256, 430	808, 549
1890	125, 760	11, 049	24, 285	356, 368	255, 976	773, 438
1891	181, 185	16, 896	22, 576	437, 126	349, 573	1, 007, 488
1892	183, 655	9, 604	15, 429	412, 383	333, 467	954, 744
1893	186, 553	8, 187	8, 644	396, 516	313, 238	913, 138
1894	211, 974	10, 634	10, 123	347, 464	307, 644	887, 839
1895	430, 862	9, 016	10, 771	357, 719	353, 796	1, 162, 164
1896	350, 355	10, 333	8, 588	317, 161	359, 991	1, 041, 428
1897	392, 337	7, 055	3, 195	235, 430	342, 187	980, 204
1898	527, 786	6, 882	3, 003	319, 789	223, 231	1, 080, 691
1899	624, 737	1, 571	...	360, 149	526, 605	1, 513, 173
1900	605, 398	14, 605	2, 147	295, 733	521, 629	1, 439, 602
1901	695, 551	28, 138	513	454, 006	575, 492	1, 753, 783
1902	721, 977	23, 649	2, 404	475, 272	728, 124	1, 951, 433
1903	832, 334	31, 710	3, 845	501, 090	668, 852	2, 037, 831
1904	791, 529	20, 141	1, 890	489, 177	684, 764	1, 987, 501
1905	935, 602	25, 862	...	438, 258	694, 214	2, 093, 936
Totals*	13, 794, 308	1, 154, 564	346, 637	26, 063, 813	25, 869, 735	67, 230, 584

The totals are for the whole period—from 1857 to 1905.

The present state of the northern fields is shown in the appended table. It will be seen that the Coromandel-Thames yield was in 1904 £42,016, and in 1905 (the latest figures) £106,034. At the same time it is interesting to note that the Ohinemuri and Waihi together for those years yielded £748,000 and £825,683; the whole Auckland field contributing £935,602 for the year 1905.

TABLE showing the QUANTITY and VALUE of GOLD entered for EXPORTATION from AUCKLAND for the Years ended the 31st December, 1905 and 1904.

District and County or Borough.	Year ending 31st December, 1905.		Year ending 31st December, 1904.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Auckland—	Oz.	£	Oz.	£
County of Coromandel ..	5,527	23,291	2,910	12,223
County of Thames ..	7,333	30,261	5,437	21,785
County of Ohinemuri ..	50,079	176,959	44,314	156,139
County of Piako ..	550	2,126	189	776
Borough of Thames ..	12,506	52,482	2,009	8,008
Te Aroha Town District ..	..	..	3	10
Great Barrier Island ..	498	1,757	210	727
Borough of Waihi ..	155,721	648,724	167,938	591,861
County of Te Aroha ..	1	2	..	..
	232,215	935,602	223,010	791,529

THE GREAT WAIHI MINE.

The discovery of this great mine does not belong, strictly speaking, to the early gold-discoveries covered by this narrative, but it affords such a graphic picture of mining vicissitudes that a tale of the early gold-discoveries in New Zealand would scarcely be complete without it. Here is the story, told a decade of years ago in the *New Zealand Herald* by Mr. John McCombie,* one of the discoverers of the mine which at the present time ranks amongst the half-dozen leading gold-mines of the world:—

It is now more than twenty years ago since I, in

* At present manager of the Talisman Consolidated, Karangahake.

company with an American named Robert Lee, started fossicking in the Ohinemuri district, and there is still a strong fascination for me in the remembrance of that time. The free life and self-dependence, together with the fact that one never knew to-day what to-morrow would bring forth, had an attraction of its own that can only be understood by those who have had similar experiences. About the month of February, 1878, we decided on going eastward of the known belt of gold-bearing country then being worked in the Waitekauri district. This took us out in the direction of Waihi, where the landscape is widespread, comprising thickly wooded hills and open plain, the latter being covered over with a stunted growth of fern and manuka scrub indicating poverty of the soil. At the time of which I write there were no Europeans in the locality, and only a few Natives belonging to the Ngatikoe Tribe who lived on the bank of the Ohinemuri River, about a mile and a half from the present Waihi Township.

Long before arriving at the scene of our subsequent adventures we could see the quartz comprising the outcrop of the now famous lode glistening beneath the rays of the morning sun; and when we came to Maungatoetoe Stream the first dish of rubble panned gave a good prospect of free gold. This convinced us that we were in an auriferous region, and we hastened on to the outcrop of the lode, looming largely up on the cone of the Pukewa spur, which rises abruptly out of the plain to a height of about 250 ft. We soon covered the intervening space and had our picks at work breaking out ore from its rugged walls. Having secured a dozen samples from as many different places along the line of the outcrop, we went back to the creek, where we commenced reducing and testing. This was done by crushing the ore on the flat stone with our hammer-headed prospecting picks, and in every instance we obtained fair dish prospects of the precious metals. Being highly pleased with these results we returned to the lode, of which we now made a thorough examination, and amongst other things we took particular note of the following: The lode appeared to be about twenty feet in thickness. It had a general north-and-south course, with an easterly underlie, and the enclosing country rock consisted chiefly of decomposed tufa, which invariably accompanies gold- and silver-bearing lodes on the Hauraki goldfields. The ore-body was laminated, streaked with sulphides of iron and silver, and sprinkled with oxide of manganese. The outcrops of several other reefs were visible on adjacent

hills, and, taken all round, the place afforded better chances of success than Waitekauri, where we had been gold-hunting for the previous six months with but scant results; and we determined to give Waihi a trial. During the afternoon we experienced a heavy gale from the north-east accompanied by a steady drizzle, and towards night, when making the return trip, we were overtaken by a regular downpour of rain which completely drenched us before reaching our camp at Waitekauri.

Next morning, the weather having cleared, we bundled our traps together, stowed them on a pack-horse, and started out with light hearts for the new El Dorado. Nothing of moment happened until we reached the Waitete Stream, where tufts of fern and flax hung from the bending shrubs, and masses of driftwood lodged high and dry on the banks, indicating the height of the "fresh" consequent upon the heavy rain which fell overnight. Although the flood-waters had receded considerably, the stream was still deep, but somewhat narrow at the crossing, and I essayed to vault over with the assistance of a long pole, which, however, broke short off when I threw my weight upon it, and landed me in the middle of the miniature mountain-torrent. I was swept down some distance before I grasped the overhanging leaves of a flax bush growing on the opposite bank to the one which I had left, and then I struggled ashore. By knotting several blades of flax together I made a rope long enough to reach from bank to bank. One end of this with a stone attached was thrown across to Lee, who made it fast to the headstall of the horse's bridle. After some persuasion we managed to make the horse enter the stream, and when we did so the first plunge launched him out of his depth, swags and all, till there was nothing but his nose visible above water. Now, I was obliged to pull my hardest upon the flax rope, so as to bring the animal loaded with all our worldly gear to the approach at my side, and in this I succeeded, more by good luck than otherwise. Fortunately, our swags were wrapped up in water-proof sheets, and therefore they were not much the worse for their immersion. Lee, who could not swim, was obliged to travel about half a mile down stream before finding a place narrow enough to leap across, and, joining me as quickly as possible, we resumed our journey. Later on that day we experienced considerable difficulty in fording two other small streams, and the sun was low down on the horizon by the time we reached our destination—tired, wet, and hungry.

The following day we commenced cutting trenches across the lode at stated intervals apart, and we got fair prospects of gold and silver at every point of intersection. As the ore appeared to be richest at the northern end of the outcrop, we resolved to test the lode there at a depth of 60 ft. beneath the surface. To accomplish this it was necessary to drive a crosscut from the western side of the spur, a distance of over 200 ft., and we at once set about the preliminaries towards carrying out our project. First of all we wanted a wheelbarrow, and the nearest place to get one was Waitekauri, about nine miles away. To convey this barrow from point to point was the most arduous task I ever undertook, and I do not think that either force or skill would compel me to repeat the performance. Before covering the first four miles of the track I had exhausted all the known methods of barrow-trundling. I tried driving it before me, pulling it after me, turning it upside down, carrying it on my shoulders, and slinging it on my back after the fashion of a Maori *pikau*, which proved to be the easiest style of taking it along. It was not quite daylight when I left Waitekauri, and yet I did not get to our camp till 8 p.m., when Lee, who had been ahead with a pack-load of tools, was starting out in search of me. The first ten days of our sojourn at Waihi were occupied in building a whare, erecting a smithy, and burning some charcoal for tool-pointing purposes. From the outset our work progressed at the rate of 5 ft. per day — the country penetrated being very favourable for driving.

Early one fine summer morning, when our tunnel was in about 80 ft., we were visited by two hoary-headed Maoris, who told us that Pukewa was a *wahi tapu*, and insisted upon our suspending operations at once. This we quietly but firmly declined to do, and after a warm debate they left for their *kainga*, where they said there were a large number of Natives who would clear us out pretty quickly.

Sure enough, next morning the old man returned, in company with several young ones and quite a host of women, who were all armed with *taiahas* and other weapons of primitive warfare. As soon as I caught sight of the advancing army of Amazons I knew from experience that our troubles were about to begin, and I attributed this Native raid to the grasping greed of a certain so-called white man, who wanted to be a sleeping partner in the mine. The spokeswoman, an aged crone, addressed herself to me in a tirade of abuse that

would have done credit to a Billingsgate fish-woman—meanwhile several ancient dames took occasion, every now and again, to emphasize their leader's remarks by waving their weapons in dangerous proximity to my face. Throughout these interesting preliminaries my mate was working in the tunnel, and at last he came out with a barrowful of stuff broken from the face. This he had tilted over the tip-head, and when about to re-enter the level three buxom damsels seized the barrow, and a general struggle ensued. For a time he held his own, but eventually he was overpowered, and drawn, barrow and all, back towards the tip-head, which was about 40 ft. in depth, tapering gradually away in the direction of a fern-covered terrace. Just when the women reached the extreme edge of the tip-head, which they had not noticed, Lee let the barrow go, and I shall never forget what followed. There was a momentary struggle on the part of the women to restore their equilibrium, but the effort came too late, and away they went down the soft tip, taking turn-about with the barrow in the matter of ground and lofty tumbling. It may have been a very ungallant thing to do, but, nevertheless, Lee and I enjoyed the performance down the tip, laughing all the while most heartily.

Maoris have a very keen sense of the ridiculous, and our laughter raised their dander properly. Assisted by their friends, the amateur female acrobats succeeded in pulling themselves together, and after arranging their drapery made straight for us—their eyes rolling savagely in their heads, and clutching their weapons in a most threatening manner. Believing discretion to be the better part of valour, under the circumstances, we sought refuge in the tunnel, where we remained for fully an hour listening to the tirade of choice epithets hurled at us by the excited viragoes outside. While this was going on we had prepared a couple of charges of blasting powder with pieces of fuse attached thereto ready for emergencies. It was a happy thought, because, finding that they could not lure us out, the Natives combined their forces to pull down the *débris* around the mouth of the tunnel, and it looked as if we were going to be buried alive. Within what seemed to us a very brief period there was not more than twelve inches of space between the *débris* and the roof of the level, and we now considered it was high time to retaliate.

Stealing quietly out under cover of the darkness caused by the filling-in of the entrance to the level, we lit the fuse attached to both powder-charges, and watch-

ing our opportunity threw them out of the small opening just in time to see them well covered by a heavy fall of earth from the sides of the open cuttings. Then we returned to the face of the level, where we had scarcely ensconced ourselves when we heard a terrible explosion outside, followed by loud exclamations of surprise on the part of the Natives. This was succeeded by a general hubbub, which gradually died away in the distance, and then we thought it advisable to make our exit. A quarter of an hour's hard shovelling enabled us to force our way out, and we struck a "bee-line" to the top of the spur for the purpose of learning which route the Natives had taken. Presently we caught sight of them going in the direction of the east coast, and we both heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing the full number on the track, tramping along Indian file, as if nothing unusual had happened. That night we decided not to do any more work till we could ascertain what shape our tormenters' ensuing movements were likely to take.

Next morning we were not much surprised to observe the same crowd of Natives put in an appearance at the mine, which was in full view of the whare, and not more than half a mile away. It took our dusky friends some time to realise that we had no intention of resuming work that day, and at length one of their number favoured us with his presence. Taking it for granted that we understood Maori, he delivered a long oration descriptive of the system under which he and his people had been robbed of their lands by the Government, both past and present. He charged Lee and I with desecrating an ancient burial-place, where his ancestors had been consigned to mother earth long before there were any pakeha thieves in the colony. Should we persist in our search for filthy lucre on sacred Pukewa, our whare and other belongings would be burnt, and we ourselves would be slung like pigs on long poles and carried out of the district. *Utu* to the amount of £1,000 would not assuage the grief of his people for disturbing the graves of their forefathers, and in his early days he had seen pakehas tomahawked for a lighter offence.

To show this old chap that we were not entirely unprepared for anything that might eventuate, we exhibited our guns and a revolver, which I think had a soothing effect upon him; but still, when going away, he threatened us with all sorts and conditions of vengeance. So far as the men were concerned, we knew there was nothing to fear; but, having no desire to meet the women in a free fight, we meandered about the whare

for fully forty-eight hours. Day after day, from early morning till dewy eve, the Maoris kept watch and ward over the mine, and, wearying of the enforced idleness, we determined to "euchre" them by working at night. Superstitious to a degree, they never gave us any trouble after dark, and the level advanced just as rapidly as would have been the case had we worked in daylight. Now they began a succession of petty annoyances extending over several weeks, and culminating in a complete clearance of everything portable in our whare. This well-matured plan was put into execution by a party of gum-diggers belonging to the Ngatipou Tribe, when we were out on a pigeon-shooting expedition, and the plunderers had a long start before we became aware of our loss. Nevertheless, we went off in pursuit, following the trail till darkness shut it out from our view, and then we were reluctantly obliged to retrace our footsteps. Since then I have often thought that it was as well we did not overtake them, because we were in a very angry mood, and the results of an interview might have been disastrous to both parties. That night we dined on roasted pigeons, and next morning tramped to Owharoa, where we purchased a fresh supply of food and clothing. For fully a fortnight we took turn and turn about in watching the whare and driving the tunnel, and thereafter we were allowed to continue our work in peace.

Within four months of the time of our starting we had driven the crosscut up to and through the foot-wall branch of the lode, which proved to be 17 ft. in thickness, and good prospects of gold and silver were obtainable from any part of it. We took out a trial lot of two tons, upon which the Thames County Council paid the cost of transit to Owharoa, where it was treated in the Smile of Fortune battery, for a return of 1 oz. 3 dwt. of bullion, value £2 17s. 6d. per ounce. This, in round numbers, was £1 11s. per ton, which did not represent more than 35 per cent. of the intrinsic value of the ore. Previous to treatment we had taken average samples for assay purposes, and these were assayed by Mr. T. Heron, who was then in the Bank of New Zealand, Thames, with the following results:—

ASSAY VALUE, ORE SAMPLE, PROSPECTORS' CLAIM, WAIHI.				
				Oz. dwt. gr.
Bullion .. ..	..	..	..	4 6 0
Containing gold .. .	..	..	..	1 2 0
Containing silver ..	..	..	..	3 4 0
Value per ton .. ..	..	..	..	£4 14 0

Armed with the bank results of the treatment of the ore by the battery process, as well as with the certificate setting forth its assay value, Lee and I did not anticipate much difficulty in obtaining the needful to exploit the mine; but, unfortunately for us, we reckoned without our hosts—the mining experts. The whole concern was reported unfavourably upon by almost every one who paid the place a visit, and who considered themselves authorities on anything appertaining to gold and silver mining. In short, we were laughed at by all the knowing ones of the day whenever we made an attempt to talk about the Waihi reefs. One authority of the first water, to whom I showed the assay certificate, scoffed at the idea of ascertaining the value of ore by assay. He said assaying was a metallurgical “fad,” dangled before the eyes of the mining community by men who wanted to make money *anyhow*, but no practical man believed in it.

While waiting for something to turn up, we heard that Hone Werahiko had struck gold at Te Aroha, and we hurried away to the scene of the new discovery. During our absence a visit was paid to our workings by a Coromandel prospector named W. Nicholl, who was so favourably impressed with the show that he induced his friends to apply for several licensed holdings on the line of lode. Before these could be legally granted it was necessary to lay a plaint against Lee and myself for non-working. This was done by Mr. A. Porter, acting on behalf of the applicants, and rather than have any legal bother about it we abandoned the ground in the Warden's Court unconditionally. The new owners not only made use of our level, whare, and other belongings *sans* fee or reward, but one of them told us that we ought to consider ourselves very lucky to get off without the imposition of a heavy fine for non-compliance with the mining regulations.

After a time two batteries were erected, and one of these was kept going continuously for many years, during which 18,000 tons of ore were dealt with for an average return of 7s. 6d. per ton or thereabouts. The tailings resulting from the treatment of this ore were all allowed to run to waste, and there are now lying in various parts of the Ohinemuri River bed hundreds of tons of these tailings that give an average assay value of £2 per ton.

No need to tell the story of the development of the great claim thus found and lost. Let us look only at

the reference made to it in the last statement (1906) of the Minister of Mines :—

“The Waihi Mine retains its premier position amongst the mines of the colony, and from the magnitude of its operations and its output of gold is entitled to rank among the largest gold-mining properties in the world. During last year 298,531 short tons (2,000 lb. to the ton) were treated for a yield of £693,671, equal to an average of £2 6s. 5·7d. per ton, and dividends to the amount of £322,339 11s. were paid, the total amount of dividends paid since the mine was opened being £1,924,617 16s. 6d. There are 330 stamps engaged in crushing operations at the company's three mills, and there are also tube mills, filter-presses, and other appliances for the efficient treatment of the ore. It is very satisfactory to note that the ore-bodies continue to maintain their characteristic sizes at the lowest levels yet reached, and that a very large output is assured for a long period.”

JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1906.

